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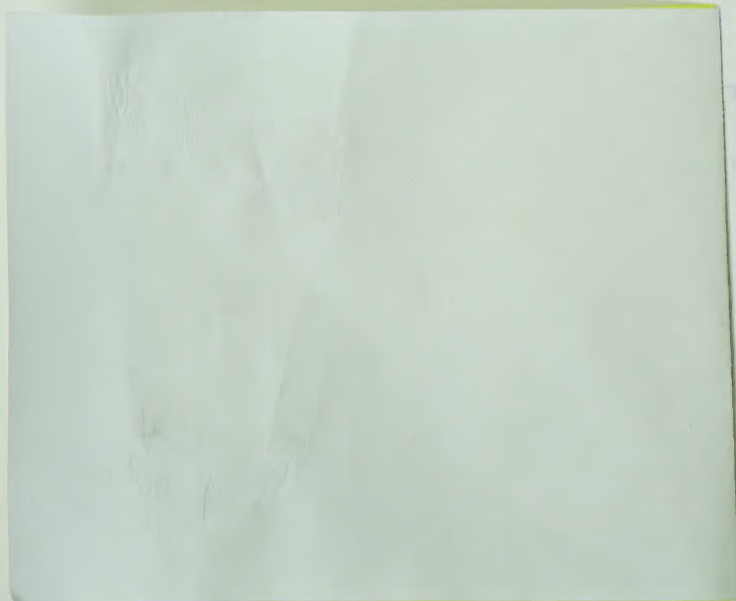
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THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA  
THE UNITED FARMERS OF ALBERTA AND THE GINGER GROUP:  
INDEPENDENT POLITICAL ACTION, 1919-1939

by



PETER DOUGLAS SMITH

A THESIS  
SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH  
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THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA  
FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research, for acceptance, a thesis entitled "The United Farmers of Alberta and The Ginger Group: Independent Political Action, 1919-1939" submitted by Peter Douglas Smith in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.





## ABSTRACT

The end of World War I marked the beginning of organized attempts by the Canadian farm community to gain control of the political decisions that affected their economic well-being. The attempts were accompanied by a loss of confidence in the two-party system of government. One alternative to traditional party government was the proposal that economic groups, not composite parties, should be the basis of government. At the same time, each member of the legislature was to be responsible to the constituency he represented. In this manner, the redress sought by the farmers would be realized.

This alternative was developed by the United Farmers of Alberta. Under pressure from its membership, the U.F.A. had entered independent political action in 1919 and had developed the proposal as a means of preserving the independence of both the U.F.A. and the agrarian political movement from the party system. The majority of the farm groups, however, favoured the creation of a broad-based party that would secure justice for all economic groups. The conflict between these two points of view developed soon after the general election of 1921 when the farm groups, organized as the National Progressive Party, had returned sixty-four members to the House of Commons. The two ideas of group political action proved irreconcilable, with the result that in 1924



there was a split in the Progressive parliamentary group and the formation of the so-called "ginger group". These members mostly from Alberta, contributed to the disintegration of the Progressive Party.

The U.F.A. federal group survived the passing of the Progressive Party, and the U.F.A. ideas of group action influenced the organization of the Independents in Parliament from 1926-1932. The Great Depression and R. B. Bennett were the catalysts for the second attempt by the U.F.A. to work with a national organization of affiliated groups. The Co-operative Commonwealth Federation was a logical extension of the U.F.A. proposal for group action, defined by opposition to the party system and refined by the experience with the Progressive Party. However, once again the ideas of group organization were at odds with the aims of a national reform party, and the U.F.A. and the "ginger group" found themselves in opposition to the general aspirations of the C.C.F. in this regard. The C.C.F. did not become a centralized political party until 1939, in part because of the influence of the U.F.A. and the "ginger group", and it was not until the last vestiges of this influence were removed that the C.C.F. was able to achieve the discipline of a traditional party organization. This in turn aided its survival in the Canadian political system.





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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

|         |  |
|---------|--|
| C.C.F.: | Co-operative Commonwealth Federation     |
| G.F.A.: | Glenbow Foundation Archives, Calgary     |
| P.A.A.: | Provincial Archives of Alberta, Edmonton |
| P.A.C.: | Public Archives of Canada, Ottawa        |
| U.F.A.: | United Farmers of Alberta                |
| U.F.O.: | United Farmers of Ontario                |





The time seems about due for a new history-writing which will attempt to explain the ideas in the heads of Canadians that caused them to act as they did, their philosophy, why they thought in one way at one period and in a different way at another period.

F. H. Underhill, "Some Reflections on the Liberal Tradition in Canada".





## CHAPTER I

### THE CALF WITH TWO HEADS: THE PROGRESSIVE PARTY, 1919-1923

This thesis is an examination of the nature of the political organization of the United Farmers of Alberta as it was interpreted by the U.F.A. Members of Parliament from 1921 to 1935. It explores the effects of the idea of independent political action, as conceived by the U.F.A. members, on the Progressive Party and the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation; it does not deal with the workings of the U.F.A. organization and the U.F.A. provincial government since this has been done elsewhere.<sup>1</sup> The theme of independent political action is considered only with reference to the basis of political action that was determined by the U.F.A. Annual Conventions and as it was understood by the federal members, particularly those individuals associated with the "ginger group"; it is a consideration of how that understanding affected the development of the political parties they associated with from 1921 to 1935. Generally speaking, the effect of independent political action as conceived by the U.F.A. and the "ginger group" was to weaken both the Progressive Party and the C.C.F. as it did not allow the growth of a disciplined, national third party organization within the contemporary parliamentary system and the general reform movement.



In order to establish and explain this development it is necessary to provide the background to the ideas which were to form the basis of independent political action for the U.F.A. and the "ginger group".

The emergence of the National Progressive Party in 1920 was the culmination of more than a decade of discontent and organization by the Canadian farm community. Between 1919 and 1920 a transition was made in the manner of agitation the farm community employed to obtain concessions for its grievances.<sup>2</sup> The transition was marked by the adoption of "The New National Policy" in November, 1918 by the Canadian Council of Agriculture and the subsequent ratification of the policy by the various provincial farm organizations in the early months of 1919. Since "The New National Policy" did not explicitly deal with the political method to be used to implement the proposals, the question remained open to discussion.<sup>3</sup> The alternatives available appeared to be restricted to two choices; the farm organizations could attempt to persuade the old-line parties (or individual Liberal and Conservative candidates) to adopt the program of legislation outlined in "The New National Policy", or the farm organizations could enter into direct political action as a separate force independent of the two old-line parties. Within the circumstances of 1919, the alternative to independent political action by the farm organizations became hard to justify and as a result the various organizations decided that the only political method which would ensure the adoption of their





platform was the entry into direct political action as a separate force.

"The New National Policy" was a repudiation of the Macdonald National Policy of 1879. The new policy called for substantial tariff reductions and eventual free trade with Great Britain, which contrasted with the old policy of protection. This contrast caused difficulties for the national Union government. The Union government, which included Liberals of farm group affiliation and high tariff Conservatives, found itself divided on the tariff issue during the budget debate of June, 1919. The new Liberal leader, Mackenzie King, was not inclined to endorse the farmers' platform as wholeheartedly as had been expected. The year had not brought a receptive response to the program from either the Liberal Party or the coalition government, and this, combined with the social and economic dislocations at the end of the First World War as well as the growing membership in the respective farm organizations, raised the demand for independent political action.<sup>4</sup>

As the farm forces gathered together, winning several federal by-elections in the autumn of 1919,<sup>5</sup> there emerged within the farmers' political movement two distinctive attitudes to the basis of future political action. These attitudes were distinguished from one another by the difference in the political method to be used in order that the movement could achieve its ends. The issue was of fundamental importance as it would determine the strength of the movement and



at the same time ensure unity of purpose. The farmers' political movement was divided between those who viewed their protest as necessarily creating a third party, agitating only for economic reform, and those who desired to introduce into the political system a new form of electoral representation, government organized according to occupational interest.

Those who espoused the latter view wished to change the whole nature of political representation as well as alter social organization.<sup>6</sup> Although the long-term implications of these attitudes were not immediately apparent, the divergence of opinion within the movement became obvious during the election campaigns of October 1919 which returned the United Farmers of Ontario as the government of Ontario and a United Farmers of Alberta candidate to the Alberta Legislature.<sup>7</sup>

Although not organized as a separate political entity in 1919, the farm groups were now winning the responsibility to have elected representatives act on their behalf in the provincial legislatures and the federal Parliament. The farm members had been elected to represent the particular grievances of the agrarian constituency and the basis of the political movement was a response to the political organization and policies of the old parties. The election of a farmer government in Ontario, October 20, 1919, placed the United Farmers of Ontario in an awkward position. Since they were not organized as a political party, the new representatives were not altogether certain that they wished to assume the position of becoming the government. They also wanted to





avoid the pitfalls of party government, and to this end, a proposal was put forward which suggested an alternative to assuming the role of a traditional party in the legislature. Quite simply, the idea was that the farmers should organize themselves as an occupational group and the government should be formed from all such organized groups in the legislature. The cabinet so constructed would be a committee of representatives from the various groups: farmer, labour, professional, and managerial; it could only be dismissed by an explicit vote of non-confidence in the legislature. The implications for the party-cabinet system of government were apparent. The composite party system would no longer exist, the traditional loss of confidence in the legislature by failing to carry a majority of votes on any issue would be modified, and the party discipline required to keep members' votes consistent for reasons of the party's survival as the government would no longer be necessary. Instead, the issue and the best interests of the occupational group would be the only factors that determined the way the individual member voted. The proposal was rejected by the U.F.O. members-elect, but the idea of occupational representation and its implications remained as a valid alternative to some within the ranks of the U.F.O. as well as with some other groups in other provinces. The chief spokesmen of occupational representation within the U.F.O. were J. J. Morrison and W. C. Good. They saw this approach as the best means of preserving the integrity of the democratic revolt of the farmers of Canada, but



the U.F.O. was divided between this faction and those who supported the new Ontario premier, E. C. Drury, who wished to create a broad-based People's Party.<sup>8</sup>

The idea of occupational representation, or as it was more commonly called, group government, was given its fullest definition and advocacy by the United Farmers of Alberta. While the U.F.O. had rejected the concept in favour of a radical political party made up of radical groups, the U.F.A. under the leadership of Henry Wise Wood used the concept to strengthen and control the political activities of its general membership. The U.F.O. proposal for a broad-based party contained all the dangers of composite parties, the effect of which was apparent in the organization and workings of the Liberal and Conservative parties. To avoid the disadvantages of the party system and to retain the integrity of the U.F.A. organization the idea of creating a third party was discarded by the U.F.A. For the Alberta group the idea of economic group organization was the means by which competition between factions could be replaced by co-operation between groups. Since occupational interest was determined to be the basis of social organization and the greater good was achieved by the harmony of these interests, co-operation among these groups was essential. Wood, however, modified the definition of the group interest by rather narrowly defining it as the U.F.A. group representing the Alberta agrarian interest; he spoke of the farmers as a collective economic group, a class, but the farmers' group he referred to was the U.F.A.



Wood's fullest exposition of his ideas for independent political action through the agency of group government was presented during the Alberta provincial by-election for Cochrane in a speech delivered at Crossfield, October 21, 1919. The U.F.A. concept as outlined by Wood was as much the product of his own thinking as it was the influence of William Irvine and the Non-Partisan League. Stressing co-operation and democratic organization rather than competition and autocracy, the dominant element in his proposal was the farmer as a member of an economic class organization. The acceptance by the U.F.A. of the Wood proposal was to drive a wedge between the U.F.A.-group government advocates and the advocates of the Ontario point of view. Even though the idea was not always understood or totally accepted within the ranks of the U.F.A., by January, 1920 Wood's position was endorsed by the U.F.A. Annual Convention and all activities of the organization--social, educational, economic, and political--came under the central direction of the U.F.A. Convention and the Executive headed by Wood.<sup>9</sup>

This move represented a distinct shift in the nature of independent political action within the provincial organization. The U.F.A. Convention of 1919 had passed a resolution approving direct political action to be carried out by the local constituency associations. This was to have been the basis of political action in Alberta for the U.F.A.<sup>10</sup> Political action, as defined by the Convention in 1920, was





now based on the central control and authority of the Convention and the Executive which in turn were the agents for the local organizations. The elected representatives of the farmers' group, responsible to the U.F.A. organization, were the agents of that organization rather than the representatives of an "agrarian political party".<sup>11</sup> By appreciating this point about the political organization of the U.F.A., the subsequent developments within the Progressive parliamentary organization and the U.F.A. can be better understood.

The distinction, however, was blurred in the rush to form a national organization for the farm groups. As events outran preparation, the need for national co-ordination of the electoral successes of the agrarian revolt became imperative. Such co-ordination was tentatively brought about when the Canadian Council of Agriculture committed itself to the support of independent political action by farmers on November 11, 1919. While the nature of the political organization remained in doubt, divided as it was between the advocates of group government and the advocates of a broad-based reform party, the farm organizations rallied behind "The New National Policy". In February, 1920, eleven Members of Parliament led by T. A. Crerar constituted themselves as the National Progressive Party. The Canadian Council of Agriculture endorsed the parliamentary group in December, 1920 and this was followed by a similar endorsement from the farm organizations at their 1921 Conventions. The endorsement meant that Crerar was recognized as the leader of the political movement of



organized farmers. However, there had been no accommodation of the two dominant ideas about the nature of independent political action within the Progressive movement.<sup>12</sup>

By the time of the federal election, December 6, 1921, the agrarian protest had established another provincial farmer government, with the election of the U.F.A. securing a majority of seats in the Alberta election of July, 1921. The basis of political action was now marked not only by provincial organizations but by provincial governments as well. The federal election campaign was waged by the Progressive movement on the issue of the tariff, anti-partyism and occupational representation. The last issue was especially used by the candidates in Alberta who were endorsed by the U.F.A. While it is not clear whether these candidates ran as U.F.A. representatives or as Progressives, they were committed not only to the idea of group government but also to the idea that they had a direct responsibility to those who nominated them. In order to maintain the democratic basis of the nomination and the accompanying accountability, many constituency associations required the signing of a recall that was held by the executive of that local constituency association.<sup>13</sup> The general campaign was carried on without a strong, central organization, and this allowed the U.F.A. candidates to run as representatives of the provincial organization, while some other organizations endorsed candidates as Progressives by the creation of a separate organization.<sup>14</sup> During the campaign the theme for all these groups, known collectively as the Progressive Party,





was independence and freedom from the party system. This was to be achieved by the looseness of organization, recall and constituency autonomy. The idea of constituency autonomy was defined as the member-elect's direct responsibility to the constituency organization from which he received his nomination. For the supporters of group government this concept was very awkward as the constituency was composed of many diverse occupational groups. By the traditional defining of a constituency in terms of a geographical area rather than by economic groups the responsibility of representation overlapped. Electoral reform was advocated, the chief of which was the single transferable vote. Until such time as this was achieved co-operation between the economic groups in the traditional constituency would be required. In Alberta this was carried out by the U.F.A. and Labour representatives although this was not always the rule.<sup>15</sup> Co-operation did not necessarily imply common interest. The practical difficulties of Wood's ideas as a solution to traditional political action were becoming evident.

This sets the background, prior to the federal election of 1921, for the elements of potential conflict that did in fact become the focus for division within the Progressive parliamentary group. At issue was the nature of independent political action for the Progressive movement, how they could best preserve the independence of the farmer in politics from the evils of the party system. The implications and the consequences of these elements did not become apparent until the



agrarian groups secured a substantial parliamentary representation on December 6, 1921. It should be noted that the problems of organization, primary loyalty of the candidates, and direct accountability, elements that were to become important to later developments within the Progressive group in the House of Commons in June, 1924, were present before the 1921 election. However, circumstances hindered the proper discussion of accommodating the two major divergent attitudes. The disparity between the doctrinaire, radical Albertans and the other element of the Progressive political movement might have been recognized and resolved, but as it was not, the stage was set for the future conflict.<sup>16</sup>

The federal election, December 6, 1921, returned 54 Progressives and 10 U.F.A. members to the House of Commons.<sup>17</sup> Representation in Parliament was drastically altered with the introduction of this sizable third grouping as it was balanced between 117 Liberals and 50 Conservatives. The new prime minister, Mackenzie King, as a result of the situation, took steps to form a coalition government consisting of Liberals and Progressives. He hoped to form the coalition by offering the Progressives cabinet positions.<sup>18</sup> In response to King's overtures, the Progressive parliamentary leader, T. A. Crerar, called a meeting of the western members-elect at Saskatoon, December 20, 1921. The meeting was the first indication of the differences in the parliamentary group, the first foreshadowing of the Progressive split of June, 1924. Although the story of what actually happened at the meeting



is not clear, it appears that a distinctive attitude on the part of certain members-elect did emerge. The U.F.A. members-elect had been invited to the meeting and it was from this quarter that the protests against the coalition were heard. At issue, for the spokesmen of the protest, was the basis of political action that the Progressive group should pursue in the new Parliament in order to uphold the best interests of the farm community.<sup>19</sup>

The attitude of the U.F.A. members-elect was expressed by Robert Gardiner, the member-elect for Medicine Hat and the leader of the U.F.A. group in the parliamentary caucus of the Progressive Party. In his report on the meeting to the U.F.A. Annual Convention, January, 1922, he commented:

. . . I took the floor of the convention [at Saskatoon] and explained our position as clearly as I could. I said the Alberta members wanted absolute independence on the question of forming a coalition with any other party and they would serve the constituency they represented and I felt I could not serve the best interests of Medicine Hat by lining myself up with one of the old political parties. I explained how we believed in the group system of organization.<sup>20</sup>

The conceptual basis Gardiner was arguing from was the group government theory of Henry Wise Wood.<sup>21</sup> The group system referred to by Gardiner required that the farm organization, in this case the U.F.A., must remain independent to make its own decisions. Its basis of political action was such that a coalition with another party was impossible. Gardiner was re-affirming the principles of delegate democracy, constituency autonomy, and an adherence to political representation that was organized by ". . . occupational groups each





nominating and introducing its delegates to the legislature".<sup>22</sup> This thinking, regardless of its practical implications and limitations in the parliamentary system of party government, demonstrated a strong distrust of partyism and the old methods of political organization and political action. In the eyes of the U.F.A. any form of alliance with the Liberals was inconceivable as it would corrupt the independent political action of their movement.<sup>23</sup> Such an attitude, however, did not preclude co-operation for the purpose of securing progressive and beneficial legislation. To emphasize this point, the U.F.A. Annual Convention of 1922 passed the following resolution:

Be it therefore resolved, that we hereby affirm our adherence to the principle of economic group organization and co-operation between economic groups, and demand that our representatives stand firm in adherence to this principle and that they oppose any steps looking to either amalgamation or affiliation with a political party or to the formation of a new political party by "broadening out".<sup>24</sup>

This point of view was reinforced by the United Farmers of Ontario which also expressed its opposition to a coalition between the Liberals and the Progressive Party. In a policy resolution, December 14, 1921, the U.F.O. took the position that the Progressive group in Parliament should avoid any action which would erode the group as the representatives of the agrarian interest. Instead of coalition the farmer members-elect were to assume a stance so as to ensure the agrarian community its fair share of consideration in any legislation proposed. But the U.F.O. organization and the



U.F.O. provincial government were divided on the issue of "broadening out", thus weakening the whole organization of the United Farmers of Ontario. Unlike the Alberta group, the U.F.O. was unable to maintain the solidarity of the group unit concerning the basis of political action.<sup>25</sup>

It is necessary to emphasize the attitudes to "broadening out", as the issue of the basis of independent political action by the farm groups was of central concern to the sixty-four members who had been designated as Progressives. The doctrinaire attitude represented by the supporters of group government had two distinguishing elements: the independence of the farm group in Parliament as an economic unit, and the preservation of the Progressives as a separate political unit giving priority to the individual member. The Alberta group added a third dimension to this position by placing the U.F.A. as the focus of loyalty and responsibility within both elements. The assumption underlying this basis of independent political action was that it was a democratic expression of the political organization of the united farmers of Canada acting through their own organizations and participating in the Progressive political movement. These were the characteristics of that section of the Progressive movement which argued against "broadening out".

Professor Morton identifies the two attitudes to independent political action among the Progressive groups as the Manitoban and the Albertan.<sup>26</sup> The categorization is acknowledged as a simplification but it does serve to





differentiate the attitude and motivation of the two respective groups in regard to political action within the movement. The Manitoban attitude favoured a political realignment on the question of the tariff. This policy, advocated by Crerar, was supported by the *Grain Growers' Guide* and was given additional support from Liberals like John W. Dafoe writing in the *Manitoba Free Press*. The Manitoban attitude hoped to ". . . recapture the historic Liberal party of rural democracy and low tariff from the protectionist elements of Quebec and Ontario. . . ." <sup>27</sup> Practical considerations meant dividing the protectionist Liberals from the low tariff Liberals in order to allow the Progressives to enter the Liberal party. Coalition with the Liberals might have effected this step, but it was blocked by the Albertans. The Manitobans tried again to secure their position by advocating that the Progressive group not accept the role of official opposition in the new Parliament even though the group was entitled to it based on its numerical strength.

The Albertans did not want to become the official opposition either, but for different reasons. They represented a more dramatic shift in terms of parliamentary organization. Since the Albertans wanted to destroy the party system of government, the concept of group government was designed to safeguard the democratic basis of political action and protect the movement from the "vested interests". The group basis of organization was defined by sharing a common idea of what the agrarian interest involved which was



further defined by the individual groups and the "New National Policy". It was further strengthened by the idea of constituency autonomy and a belief that the party system could be overthrown. The Albertans represented both a belief in the virtues of decentralized control for political organizations and a belief in the necessity of democratic political action to redress economic grievances. There would be no need for the traditional caucus with its coercive discipline on the individual member, nor would there be a need for the anti-democratic order of prime minister and cabinet with an opposition that was essentially impotent:

Instead of such a party cabinet there would be a composite cabinet, made up through the proportional representation of the groups in the legislature, which was to hold office until deliberately dismissed by a vote of want of confidence in the legislature. . . . By such devices the Albertans hoped to put an end to the mock warfare of government and opposition and to institute stable, "non-political" government.<sup>28</sup>

The Manitobans did not want to become the official opposition because in opposing the Liberal government it was felt they could not realize their hope of realignment. Instead, they would only become the official critics of the government which was a role they could maintain without jeopardizing their primary goal. The Albertans could accept this approach, although they did not regard the matter as the Manitobans did as a question of opposing or supporting a government. Rather, it was a matter of how their constituents could be best represented and the agrarian group's integrity best preserved. The Albertans could not betray that



responsibility by assuming a role in the traditional party system.

Thus, the two factions had reached an agreement about their role in the forthcoming parliamentary session. The agreement illustrates the proposition that, although the end may be accepted by two groups, the reasons for the acceptance may be quite dissimilar. Because of the dissimilarity, the limited ends might become an issue. However, in this case, the long-term ends of each faction, although dissimilar from one another, had not interfered with each obtaining what it wanted. On more specific issues, no accommodation or agreement might be reached. This was to become the rule rather than the exception for the Progressive group in Parliament. The Albertan attitude made caucus discipline difficult to achieve as it was held to be the principle best suited for the new political order. Based on the idea of constituency autonomy, it forced the caucus to take into consideration the individual's right to determine his own course of action and vote on the basis of conscience and what he had determined was the will of his constituents. It allowed for the individual to vote against the will of a majority of the caucus which obviously would create problems in maintaining a united group front. The U.F.A. members in particular held that their direct responsibility was first to their constituency, then to the U.F.A. group as a whole, and lastly to the Progressive caucus. The Progressive caucus had an organizational structure, a group chairman and a chief whip assisted by a group





whip from each of the provincial units,<sup>29</sup> which created the semblance of a traditional parliamentary organization; however, the Albertan declaration of the individual right to differ and vote against the majority opinion was a weakness in the parliamentary group's ability to present a united front. This decentralization of authority was to cause immediate problems for the Progressive caucus especially as certain individuals began to group together and justified their actions because of the Albertan basis of political action.

One of the first indications of the grouping of individuals because of these attitudes came in the parliamentary session of 1922 during the budget debate. The Fielding budget reduced the tariff on some items, but the Progressive group was not satisfied.<sup>30</sup> Crerar, on behalf of the group, moved a sub-amendment to a Conservative amendment. The sub-amendment read: ". . . that this House is of the opinion that the principle of protection as a basis of fiscal policy in Canada is unsound and not in the best interests of the Dominion."<sup>31</sup> It was ruled out of order for procedural reasons by the Speaker and the decision was upheld by a majority vote of Conservatives and Liberals. The importance of the proposed sub-amendment was the caucus discussion that had preceded its introduction into debate on June 5. The Progressive caucus reportedly had divided on the sub-amendment with some members wanting specific proposals for tariff reductions and a firmer condemnation of the principle of protection. Five



or six members from Alberta, along with Agnes Macphail from Ontario, apparently did not approve of the general statement and their dissension forced Crerar to the point that he was alleged to have threatened to resign if complete caucus support was not forthcoming.<sup>32</sup> The Alberta members were not specifically identified, but a coalescing of certain Progressives was taking place, a development that was beginning to strain the unity of the caucus.

By November, 1922, the unworkability of the two attitudes within the movement became an open issue for the Progressive parliamentary group. The Albertan position was directly challenged by Crerar in a letter that offered his resignation as the Progressive House leader. The letter, presented to a conference of the members in Winnipeg, November 10, outlined Crerar's reasons for repudiating the Albertan-Wood position. The exponents of the two variant attitudes clashed over the nature of farmer political action with Crerar representing a reform wing of the Liberal party and Wood representing a revolutionary class movement.<sup>33</sup> The nature of the Progressive political movement and its objectives were not to be defined as long as the Wood influence remained, even as a minority opinion, and since the movement did not expel dissidents it could not achieve unity, and, therefore, began to fragment.

At the Winnipeg conference a resolution was submitted that was designed to establish a new co-ordinating agency to replace the Canadian Council of Agriculture which was preparing to withdraw from political involvement.<sup>34</sup> The



Albertans submitted a counter-resolution which re-asserted the principle of group political action through constituency autonomy. They stated that political organization was the primary concern of the constituency organization and that control of political action should remain with the local association.<sup>35</sup> These ideas had been repudiated by Crerar in his letter of resignation when he had stated that the Progressive group as a whole must take on a central authority if the movement was to survive. By dissenting, the Albertans<sup>36</sup> forced an amendment to the original resolution which placed the decision to create a national Progressive organization with the constituency executives, or the appropriate provincial body. Although a national organization was tentatively held to be the goal of the movement, there was no concrete step taken to achieve it. For the U.F.A. organization such an assertion on the part of its members at the convention was obligatory if they were to be consistent with U.F.A. principles of political action. *The U.F.A.* commented accordingly:

From the standpoint of Alberta the outcome of the Winnipeg conference is satisfactory. The position of the organized farmers of this Province is as strong, their Parliamentary representatives are more effectively mobilized, and their capacity and opportunity for usefulness are greater than they have ever been. . . . The Alberta members recognize that they are in fact elected for legislative purposes only. They could not logically assent to the creation, by themselves as elected members, of any form of centralized committee to assume control of the political activities of the electorate. This control cannot be democratically exercised unless it is vested entirely in the organized citizens themselves.<sup>37</sup>

The Winnipeg conference also dealt with two other matters of importance to the Progressive parliamentary group.





The first was the election of Robert Forke to replace Crerar as the chairman of the group and as the House leader. The appointment left the Manitobans, to all appearances, as the dominant public voice for the group. However, the real strength of the parliamentary group had been reduced to its collective voting power in the House of Commons, for, short of strong leadership and organization, the real power had dissipated into the provincial organizations and the auxiliary groupings. The second development at the conference within the parliamentary group was the modification of the whip-chairman system that had been employed during the 1922 session. An executive committee was created consisting of a representative from each provincial group to assist the new House leader. Robert Forke was elected as the chairman of the committee by the parliamentary members as a whole. Together, the chairman and the executive committee assumed and shared the responsibility which Crerar had carried out almost entirely by himself during the previous session. With one session behind them, the inexperienced members were now getting a feel for parliamentary procedure and were now willing to assume more say in the operation of the parliamentary organization. The Ontario group had two representatives on the committee compared with one each from the other provincial units. Alfred Speakman was the representative from the U.F.A. group on the executive committee.<sup>38</sup> The power of the Progressive leader in the House of Commons was severely curtailed by the creation of the executive committee. The



U.F.A. group had been largely responsible for this change in an attempt to prevent the "broadening out" tendencies of the majority of Progressive members. The parliamentary organization was becoming more decentralized, a move that would allow for more independent individual or group action while undermining the discipline of caucus. In effect, the organization was fostering the creation of splinter factions although these were based on provincial units rather than on the collaboration of individuals from the various groups around the idea of group action.

The Progressive parliamentary group, organized on a new basis and having an uncommitted definition for future action, prepared for the 1923 session. There were two developments during this session that began to distinguish some members of the Progressive group from the rest; these developments showed some members to be more radical in the policies they advocated than were the rest of the parliamentary group as these individuals emerged from their silence and lack of confidence in the House of Commons to become aggressive and outspoken in the debates of the 1923 session. These members pursued certain interests which clearly differentiated them from the other Progressives and this came to the public's notice during the debate on the revision of the Bank Act. Through the auspices of the Standing Committee on Banking and Commerce and the influence of William Irvine, the Albertans initiated the discussion of the idea of the need for a central



bank to control currency and credit, and introduced the theories of C. H. Douglas into Canada. The general consensus among the Progressive, Liberal and Conservative members about Social Credit, credit reform and a central bank was that the proposed reforms were too radical and probably unworkable; but the Albertans held fast to their position.<sup>39</sup> In doing so they only increased the gap between themselves and the other Progressives.

As a result, the Albertans became more aggressive in debate. No longer hampered by the feeling that they were inexperienced about how to conduct themselves in Parliament, these members began to voice their opposition to the existing *status quo* and various individuals from the different provincial groups were brought together to press for more radical reforms of both a political and economic nature.<sup>40</sup> They began to emerge as the unofficial opposition to the policies advanced by the Liberals and the Conservatives. The grouping of these individuals around reforms that went farther than the House was prepared to follow distinguished these individuals for their outspokenness in debate. These individuals, notably W. C. Good and Agnes Macphail from Ontario, Milton Campbell from Saskatchewan, and some of the U.F.A. members, Robert Gardiner, E. J. Garland, Henry Spencer and George Coote, were easily distinguishable from the relatively silent Progressives and were only overshadowed by the Labour members, William Irvine and J. S. Woodsworth.





The years from 1919 to 1923 had provided much fuel to the fires of reform that the Albertan position represented. The stage was now set for further dissension in the ranks of the Progressive parliamentary group. When this dissension led to an open split in the Progressive group during the 1924 session, the effect was to be the most critical for the U.F.A. organization and forced the U.F.A. to take steps to further define its position on independent political action in order to maintain the solidarity of the whole organization.



## NOTES TO CHAPTER I

<sup>1</sup>Carl Betke, "The United Farmers of Alberta, 1921-1935: The Relationship Between the Agricultural Organization and the Government of Alberta" (unpublished M.A. thesis, University of Alberta, 1971); C. B. Macpherson, *Democracy in Alberta: Social Credit and the Party System* (2nd ed.; Toronto, 1962).

<sup>2</sup>W. L. Morton, *The Progressive Party in Canada* (Toronto, 1950), p. 3-60; W. K. Rolph, *Henry Wise Wood of Alberta* (Toronto, 1950), pp. 18-72; Paul Sharp, *The Agrarian Revolt in Western Canada, A Survey Showing American Parallels* (Minneapolis, 1948), pp. 1-127; W. Paterson, "The Progressive Political Movement, 1919-1930" (unpublished M.A. thesis, University of Toronto, 1940), chapters 1-3.

<sup>3</sup>Morton, *Progressive Party*, p. 63. "The New National Policy" applied to federal not provincial matters.

<sup>4</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 105-06; Rolph, *Wood*, pp. 72-73; R. M. Dawson, *William Lyon Mackenzie King, A Political Biography, 1874-1923* (Toronto, 1958), pp. 311-26.

<sup>5</sup>Farmer members were returned in four federal by-elections that autumn, the first being the election of O. R. Gould for Assiniboia in Saskatchewan, followed by victories in New Brunswick and Ontario; Morton, *Progressive Party*, pp. 82-83.

<sup>6</sup>W. L. Morton, "The Western Progressive Movement, 1919-1921," *Canadian Historical Association Report*, 1946, pp. 41-54; Rolph, *Wood*, pp. 62-67.

<sup>7</sup>Rolph, *Wood*, pp. 84-86; Morton, *Progressive Party*, pp. 83-94.

<sup>8</sup>Morton, *Progressive Party*, p. 86.

<sup>9</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 86-94; Rolph, *Wood*, pp. 88-90; Betke, "United Farmers of Alberta," pp. 19-30.

<sup>10</sup>Rolph, *Wood*, pp. 73-74.

<sup>11</sup>The distinction is from Rolph, *Wood*, p. 90. The basis of independent political action made the organization more than just another reform movement, *ibid.*, p. 91; Morton, *Progressive Party*, p. 94.

<sup>12</sup>Morton, *Progressive Party*, pp. 94-96, 106.



<sup>13</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 120-21.

<sup>14</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 118-22; Leo Courville, "The Saskatchewan Progressives" (unpublished M.A. thesis, University of Saskatchewan, Regina, 1971), p. 109.

<sup>15</sup>Martin Robin, *Radical Politics and Canadian Labour, 1880-1930* (Kingston, 1968), pp. 202-03.

<sup>16</sup>This is not an underestimation of other divisions as well, for example, the issue of economic policy, Morton, *Progressive Party*, pp. 108-10, and its role in the future developments, Rolph, *Wood*, pp. 34-35, 139-69.

<sup>17</sup>H. Scarrow, *Canada Votes, A Handbook of Federal and Provincial Election Data* (New Orleans, 1962), pp. 34-44. Scarrow records the election of 11 Progressives from Alberta. This writer would argue that there were 10 U.F.A. members elected along with one Independent, J. T. Shaw from Calgary. This method helps to distinguish the basis of the Progressive group in the House of Commons.

<sup>18</sup>Morton, *Progressive Party*, pp. 130-31; Dawson, *King*, I, pp. 361-62; F. W. Gibson, ed., *Cabinet Formation and Bicultural Relations* (Ottawa, 1970), pp. 72-73.

<sup>19</sup>Morton, *Progressive Party*, pp. 132-35.

<sup>20</sup>*Winnipeg Tribune*, January 17, 1922, p. 5. Quoted in Morton, *Progressive Party*, p. 133.

<sup>21</sup>Macpherson, *Democracy in Alberta*, pp. 38-54.

<sup>22</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 40.

<sup>23</sup>Morton, *Progressive Party*, pp. 219-20. King's unsuccessful bid to obtain an Alberta seat for Charles Stewart, the former Alberta premier, by having one of the U.F.A. members-elect resign had prompted the action of the 1922 Convention in condemning the attempt and a resolution was passed to prevent such an occurrence in the future.

<sup>24</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 221.

<sup>25</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 212-16.

<sup>26</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 107-08, 149-51. The categorization is meant to classify two points of view. It does not restrict the attitudes to the two provincial groups alone as there were other groups and individuals from other provinces who shared either attitude.





<sup>27</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 149.

<sup>28</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 150-51.

<sup>29</sup>*Grain Growers' Guide*, March 15, 1922. Cited in Paterson, "Progressive Political Movement," p. 50, and Morton, *Progressive Party*, p. 152n.

<sup>30</sup>Morton, *Progressive Party*, pp. 155-56.

<sup>31</sup>*House of Commons Debates*, 1922, III, p. 2473.

<sup>32</sup>Ramsay Cook, ed., *The Dafoe-Sifton Correspondence, 1919-1927* (Altona, 1966), p. 115. The source of the details is a letter from Dafoe to Sifton, June 8, 1922.

<sup>33</sup>Rolph, *Wood*, pp. 111-13; Morton, *Progressive Party*, pp. 159-64.

<sup>34</sup>Rolph, *Wood*, pp. 116-17.

<sup>35</sup>Morton, *Progressive Party*, p. 166.

<sup>36</sup>The U.F.A. members were Gardiner, Henry Spencer, Alfred Speakman, W. T. Lucas, Donald Kennedy, George Coote and L. H. Jelliff. They were supported by J. T. Shaw from Calgary and Agnes Macphail from Ontario.

<sup>37</sup>*The U.F.A.*, November 15, 1922, p. 3.

<sup>38</sup>*Ibid.*, November 15, 1922, p. 3 and March 15, 1923, p. 4.

<sup>39</sup>Certain of the U.F.A. members had been interested in monetary reform prior to this time, see Sharp, *American Revolt*, p. 114.

<sup>40</sup>Morton, *Progressive Party*, pp. 185-89; P.A.A., interview with E. J. Garland by J. E. Cook, May 4, 1970, transcript. Mr. Garland suggested that the inexperience of the Progressive members had led them to be quite cautious during the first session of Parliament. They adopted this policy until they could learn the rules and procedures, and once this was done they began to join in the debates. The caution of their fellow members in debate seemed to act as a prod for these individuals to become more vocal.



## CHAPTER II

### THE PROGRESSIVE SPLIT: BIRTH AND DEATH OF THE GINGER GROUP, 1924-1925 .

By 1924 the Progressive group appeared no different than in the previous two sessions in spite of the underlying tensions within the caucus caused by the developments discussed in the first chapter. The individual members continued to hold their particular feelings and ideas about certain issues and all tried to adhere as best they could to the respective attitudes that made them Progressives and not Liberals or Conservatives. It was becoming increasingly difficult, however, to define this position which was as much the result of the conflict over the basis of independent political action and organization in the House of Commons as it was the inability of the two incompatible attitudes to co-ordinate their activities so as to arrive at a consensus as to what exactly constituted beneficial legislation. Some issues, like the Crow's Nest freight rates, were a rallying point but others were only disruptive. No national organization was forthcoming although an attempt to set one up had been tried in January, 1924.<sup>1</sup> As the 1924 session progressed, other developments took place that only served to hasten the disintegration of the parliamentary group from within. It was both an immediate and long-term culmination of the difficulties



that the group had been experiencing since the session of 1922.

The immediate catalyst was J. S. Woodsworth and his amendment to the 1924 budget calling for ". . . a lowering of the tariff on the necessities of life, the loss of revenue to be made up by taxes on unearned income, unimproved land values, and a graduated land tax."<sup>2</sup> Woodsworth's amendment was essentially the same one that Robert Forke had moved on behalf of the Progressive group during the 1923 budget debate. The amendment in 1923 had forced the Liberals and Conservatives into a protectionist common front which had defeated the motion.<sup>3</sup> This time, however, the Progressives were not certain whether or not they should support the amendment, some feeling it was only a token gesture by Woodsworth to divide their ranks while others feared the Conservatives might also support it in an attempt to bring down the government.<sup>4</sup> The Progressives were caught in what some were to interpret as a conflict between principle and expediency and the majority decided not to take the chance in defeating the government. Instead, they decided to accept the concessions as they were indicated in the administration's budget.

The issue became a two-fold one for the Albertans. To be consistent they would have to support the Woodsworth amendment. The other part of the issue involved the question of whether a government had to fall if defeated in a vote that was not explicitly a want of confidence motion. The Albertans thought the defeat of a government should only





result from an explicit vote of no-confidence, not whenever the government failed to receive a majority of votes on any motion. Parliamentary tradition, exemplified by such a device, was for the Albertans clearly anachronistic and undemocratic.<sup>5</sup> It was the party system intimidating the duly elected representatives of the general electorate at its worst.

When the final division came on the Woodsworth amendment in the early hours of May 16, 1924, it was defeated 204-16. Thirteen Progressives<sup>6</sup> voted with Woodsworth, Irvine, and Shaw in favour of the amendment. The result was to cause much soul-searching among at least ten of these Progressives during the next few weeks.<sup>7</sup> Their frustration with the action and the organization of the Progressive caucus was caused by the stance of their colleagues, many of whom were now appearing to be more sympathetic with the Liberal party than they were with the aims of an independent Progressive movement.<sup>8</sup> The emergence of a grouping of individuals within the Progressive caucus was reported soon after the May 16 vote. The newspaper reports suggested that the new grouping had been apparent for some months, but that the form it was to take was not clear. It was obvious that it would comprise those Progressives who had adopted the Albertan attitude for it was to be a group and not a party; it would include the two Labour members (Woodsworth and Irvine) and the Independent from Calgary, J. T. Shaw, along with most of the Progressives who had supported the Woodsworth amendment.<sup>9</sup>



But there was to be one final issue of principle to come before these dissident Progressives would separate themselves from their colleagues, and this issue arose in the first week of June, 1924.

The final step leading to the Progressive split came in early June when a majority of the Progressives agreed to support the voting of funds to send a parliamentary delegation to the British Empire Exhibition at Wembley, England. The dissident Progressives decided the time had come to take action against the strictures of majority rule in caucus, the demands it was placing on the integrity of the movement, and the now rather blatant patronage the Liberals were using to undermine the less principled Progressive members.<sup>10</sup> The responsibility of an elected member was to his constituents and the member was not discharging that responsibility by going on pleasure trips to England at the taxpayer's expense. That many Progressives would support such a proposal only demonstrated how far the principles of the movement had been eroded. The dissident Progressives chose the issue of caucus discipline because they felt that it was here the independence of the political movement was being eroded in favour of the party system and patronage. To back up their arguments about the dictatorial nature of caucus, the members invoked the concepts of constituency autonomy and the necessity of maintaining the independence of the farm members from the two old parties. The method they chose to emphasize the point was a letter to Robert Forke outlining their grievances and



notifying him of their intention to withdraw from the caucus in order to better pursue the independent political action they had been elected to represent.

The letter was signed by six members of the Progressive group. Four were U.F.A. members: Robert Gardiner (Medicine Hat), E. J. Garland (Bow River), Donald M. Kennedy (West Edmonton), and Henry E. Spencer (Battle River); the other two were Milton N. Campbell (Mackenzie) from Saskatchewan and Agnes Macphail (Southwest Grey) of Ontario.<sup>11</sup> The letter was apparently released to the press by Forke and published June 20, 1924.<sup>12</sup> Both the letter from the six and Forke's reply appeared wholly or in part, or were referred to in most Canadian daily newspapers on June 20 and June 21. The *Calgary Albertan* and the *Ottawa Citizen* reprinted both letters in full. The letters were reprinted in *The U.F.A.* on July 2, 1924 and in *The Progressive* June 26 and July 2, 1924.<sup>13</sup> The source of the story was the Canadian Press and it was here that the six were referred to as the "so-called ginger group". The first reference to a "ginger group" was in the *Manitoba Free Press*, June 18, 1924, with the explanatory note that the group was so-called because of the pep it injected into Parliament. This was the only explanatory note to appear in all the articles that contained comments on the Progressive split. If the term had any other contemporary significance, it would appear that this was to be understood or implied and no further explanation was required.<sup>14</sup>





The letter defined the position of the six members and their reasons for deciding to withdraw from the Progressive caucus. Starting from the premise that the primary responsibility of an elected member was his duty to his constituents, and that this was the democratic principle all the Progressive members had been elected to represent in the House of Commons, the six outlined their grievances with examples of organization and political action they felt had transgressed the basis of independent political action since the Saskatoon conference in December, 1921.<sup>15</sup> Expressing their anti-partyism the six maintained their loyalty to the concept of occupational representation. The letter ended with this summation:

The divergence of viewpoint has been so marked, that it would seem in the best interests of the movement that we be left free from constraint to work for the cause, independently from the present Parliamentary organization. Such a course, we believe, would enable us to co-operate more harmoniously and freely with those who remain in the Progressive group and who are in agreement with us on any particular issue.

It is with a full realization of our duty to our constituents, and for the purpose of preserving the virility and independence of the political movement of organized farmers of Canada that we now feel it necessary to take such action as has been indicated. We desire, however, to make it perfectly clear that we are free to co-operate with all others, and invite and welcome the assistance of those of all parties who genuinely desire legislation such as will best promote the interests of Canada as a whole.

This letter represented the final step in the seemingly irreconcilable problems of concepts, attitudes, and practical action that had been evident within the Progressive parliamentary group since 1921 and within the movement as a whole



since October, 1919. The differences had led to an open split in the Progressive political movement. The fundamental question was over the nature of independent political action on the matter of where the farm members' primary responsibility lay, and to what extent this responsibility justified the complete independence of the individual member. The more immediate question, however, was the effect the withdrawal would have on the Progressive caucus. The cleavage threatened the unity of the caucus in that others might follow the lead of the "ginger group" which would not only split the caucus but also the provincial groups composing it. Prior to the letter from the "ginger group", the cleavage was confined to caucus; now it was public and a new alignment might take place. The split seemed to have no political advantage for either side and although it did give more freedom to the "ginger group", the split tended to isolate these members from their fellow members. The alternatives for new arrangements and alignments were numerous, all of which seemed only to serve to weaken the Progressives' role in the House of Commons.

The "ginger group" were joined by four more Progressives on July 4, 1924.<sup>16</sup> In another letter to Forke, these members indicated their support of the "ginger group" and their own intention to withdraw from caucus, at least for the remainder of the 1924 session. In their letter they stated:

As our names have been associated in recent newspaper despatches with those of the seceding members of the Progressive group, and there has been a demand that we should define our position, we herewith make the following brief statement:



In the first place we should like to say that we are in large measure in agreement with the statement of principles and viewpoint issued by the seceding members. In the second place, as regards the work of parliament, we have been for a long time in active and regular collaboration with most of the seceders and believe it our duty to continue that collaboration. For the remainder of the session, therefore, we think it better to discontinue our attendance at the Progressive caucus, we believe further that a proper reorganization of the group would result in increased harmony and efficiency, and might bring about reunion. We sincerely hope that such a desirable reorganization may take place before the work of another session begins.

The letter was signed by W. C. Good and Preston Elliott from Ontario, George Coote from Alberta, and W. J. Ward from Manitoba.

There were no others who publicly declared their support for and joined in similar action as that taken by the "ginger group" in June. The "ginger group" and its four supporters, drawn together by what they believed should be the movement's principles of independent political action, were now free to demonstrate those principles in Parliament.

Although the action of the "ginger group" and the other four Progressive members was supported by three newspapers, *The Farmers' Sun*, *The U.F.A.*, and the *Ottawa Citizen*,<sup>17</sup> most commentators anticipated that the split would only lead to more lively debate and progressive legislative proposals in the House. *The Progressive*, for example, was not discouraged by the turn in events and cautiously advised its readership that the split signified the manifestation of a new idea, that the individual member and not parties, were responsible for the action of the House of Commons.<sup>18</sup> The newspaper





emphasized that the departing members were not renouncing Progressive principles but were only asking for more freedom to advance those principles. The *Calgary Albertan*, probably more understanding of the U.F.A. principles involved in the split than any other Canadian daily but not very sympathetic to the principles, noted the concept of economic group organization was such that it necessarily had radicals and reactionaries at the same time.<sup>19</sup> The "ginger group" fell into the former category; its members were judged to be the most vigorous and progressive of the farm members at Ottawa. The adjectives were used to describe the members as economic reformers rather than political reformers: the *Albertan's* experience with the U.F.A. provincial government had indicated to the newspaper that the concept of group government was unworkable. The economic reform the "ginger group" stood for was a free trade policy as compared with the moderate low-tariff policy of the other Progressives. The editorial ended with this interpretation of the split:

The meaning of this break at this time, seems to be the minority is opposed to the inevitable trend following the progressive policies of the government, leading to a fusion of the Liberals and the Progressives. They are opposed to any let up in the progressive policy of independence of any party.

The newspaper added a minor footnote to the effect that the whole Progressive group in Parliament was now weakened by the departure of its most effective members.

In contrast to this type of editorial assessment of the Progressive split, *The Financial Post* presented a rather



hysterical two-part analysis in its editions of July 18 and 25, 1924. The author of the articles was not identified. In the first article, the *Post* writer reported the split by conjuring up associations and by making innuendoes that were calculated to discredit the "ginger group" without assessing the real nature of the split. The association of the members of the "ginger group", which in this report meant all ten of the seceding members, was defined as the manifestation of the International Communist Conspiracy.<sup>20</sup> The "Red Scare" tactics were employed to expose this association for what it really was. By an interesting pattern of associations, the "ginger group" was determined to have a "pinkish tint" and the group's members, while not communists themselves, were being influenced by well-known "Reds", that is Woodsworth and Irvine. In view of their involvement in radical labour politics, their espoused pacificism, and their university training, the *Post* was convinced that the two Labour members were the agents of international Communism. The two, using Shaw of Calgary as a go-between, had seized control and direction of the ten Progressives and were going to use them for unknown ends. The second *Post* article was a rather incoherent piece of logic throwing as many elements together as possible to make the point and thereby destroying all distinctions:

Is the Ginger Group, therefore, really a crusading force, as its members honestly, sincerely believe it to be, or is it the sub-conscious crystallization of the Woodsworth-Irvine-Stevenson<sup>21</sup> brand of communism? The propagation of the Douglas credit scheme in Canada lies at the door



of this trio, and when Irvine bluffed parliament into bringing Major Douglas from England to expound his theories it was the present so-called Gingerites who held up his [*sic*] hands and supported him. . . . One is then tempted to ask whether it is red chestnuts or blue the "Gingerites" will be taught to scorch their fingers on.<sup>22</sup> Is it the Stevenson link with the Tories, or the Irvine link with the Communists that will complete the chain.

The analysis, if it can be described that way, was unique in the press coverage of the day.

The *Ottawa Citizen* editorially supported the "ginger group", but it was in *The U.F.A.* that the group was defined in terms of the direct impact of the Progressive split on the basis of group organization that the Alberta farmers asserted for independent political action.<sup>23</sup> The challenge of the "ginger group" was that of a democratically organized group in politics, and the lack of support for the action of the U.F.A. members by all the Alberta members was a matter of concern. It was hoped that the Annual Convention would instruct the representatives on what principles of political action should be binding on all members and this was the question that was debated and echoed in the pages of *The U.F.A.* for the next six months.

The controversy surrounding the Progressive split involved almost immediately the parliamentary organization. The chief Progressive whip, J. F. Johnstone, became the center of attention as he seemed to personify the worst characteristics of caucus discipline. He was accused of stifling debate on the Woodsworth amendment by arranging for those who favoured the motion to speak last in the hope they would not





get an opportunity to speak at all.<sup>24</sup> The allegation, made by E. J. Garland, was denied by Johnstone and he found supporters among the Progressive group.<sup>25</sup> The question was how much freedom of action an individual member could realistically assume to have in the parliamentary system; in the loose framework of the Progressive caucus and working within the bounds of parliamentary traditions, the "ginger group", and the U.F.A. members in particular, did not really have grounds for complaint. Or at least so those Progressives who supported Johnstone thought. The antagonism generated by this aspect of the split did not help to heal the wounds caused by the personal recriminations from both sides of the argument.<sup>26</sup>

The debate for the remainder of the 1924 session was taken up by the Church Union Bill and the Hudson Bay Railway, matters that did not really allow for any impact from the new grouping. However, the House of Commons now contained at least four groups and the situation, if allowed to continue, might cause some interesting changes in the political system, for example, a revision of the manner in which committee members were appointed.<sup>27</sup> But, for the remainder of the session, the "ginger group" and the four other Progressives who had joined the secession did not meet with the Progressive caucus and did not take their direction from it.<sup>28</sup> The ten had obtained their independence from caucus rule and now faced that responsibility without appearing to take on any of the characteristics of party organization.<sup>29</sup>



The "ginger group" link with Woodsworth and Irvine has been noted previously. The withdrawal of the "ginger group" from the Progressive caucus had been taken in order to achieve a greater independence for co-operative action with other groups and individuals to secure the most beneficial legislation in the House of Commons. Part of that co-operation involved the working together between economically organized groups and the co-operation between farmer and labour groups. Since 1922 members of the "ginger group"<sup>30</sup> had demonstrated a willingness to co-operate with the two Labour members and Shaw. Woodsworth wrote, early in the 1922 session, that he had had a number of meetings with " . . . certain Progressives who recognize their responsibility to the labour section of their constituencies."<sup>31</sup> The basis of co-operation was thereby defined within the framework of occupational representation as formulated by the U.F.A. and Henry Wise Wood.

Although Wood felt that farmer groups and labour groups did not have a natural affinity of interest, he did think that on specific issues co-operation could be justified.<sup>32</sup> Co-operation could be justified to effect electoral victories as it had when many of the U.F.A. members had received labour support during the 1921 federal election.<sup>33</sup> But some, like George Coote, had run as a U.F.A. candidate against a labour candidate; therefore, in order to achieve co-operation, it was first necessary to find issues of common concern to each organized group.<sup>34</sup> For the U.F.A. this was further defined by the various Annual Convention resolutions



passed yearly by the provincial organization. The reform nature of the co-operation was secondary to the basis of political action that had been defined at the 1919 and 1920 Annual Conventions.

The idea of democratic group political action, independent of other groups or parties, was not necessarily understood by the other Progressives nor by the members of the old parties. The generalization can be extended to state that the concept was not necessarily understood by many in the society at large.<sup>35</sup> An exchange in the House of Commons in June, 1924 between the "ginger group" and J. A. Robb will serve to illustrate the point; the debate involved the nature, number and expense of sending the parliamentary delegation to the Wembley Exhibition:

Mr. Gardiner: The minister has not yet answered the question, put on several occasions, as to how many groups in this House were going to be represented--how many from the Liberal party, how many from the Conservative party, how many from the Progressive party--and whether labour was to be represented.

Mr. Robb: I will be frank with my hon. friend. We started out on the assumption that there were three recognized groups in this House. I think the representatives will be decided on the same basis as that on which the committees of the House are decided.

Mr. Garland (Bow River): There are four groups.

Mr. Gardiner: Is the Labour group not recognized in this House or in this country?

Mr. Robb: Yes, there is no objection to recognizing the Labour group, but if we follow the rule that prevails in the appointment of





committees I am not sure that the members of the Labour group are sufficient to bring them in under the quota.

Mr. Gardiner: Then are the labouring classes of this country not to have a representative from this House?

Mr. Robb: I did not say so. I said that the Labour group were not sufficient in numbers to enable them to be included in the quota on the basis of nomination of committees. There is no reason why they should not be recognized.<sup>36</sup>

The point is here emphasized to stress another stage in the growing tension within the Progressive group. While the majority appeared to be moving in a direction that signalled the absorption of these members by the Liberal party, the minority were moving in another direction and defining themselves in terms of the Albertan concepts of independent political action. The minority was coalescing around these principles and issues and became quite distinct from the general developments that were contributing to the disintegration of the Progressive movement, although in some measure they had contributed to those developments. By affiliating with the Labour members, the "ginger group" was exhibiting its adherence to a political theory that was generally dismissed as unworkable. The co-operative principle demanded a radical revision of the system of representation in Parliament as well as demanding open co-operation with other occupationally organized groups. In this way the "ginger group" can be interpreted as an attempt to prove that the theory was a workable one, one that would achieve the best legislation for all



groups in society. In order to represent the labour section of their constituencies, the farmer members had to co-operate with the two Labour members. Until the electoral system was re-organized by proportional representation and the basis of political organization determined by economic groups this was the best arrangement that could be hoped for. But, as the above exchange demonstrates, they would continue to press for the changes. Co-operation did not always mean unanimous agreement and it did not mean unity of the groups, although it did signify a move away from partyism.<sup>37</sup>

The parliamentary session of 1924 was clearly marked by these developments. The Progressive party was undeniably split, essentially by principle but also by policy.<sup>38</sup> The dissident Progressives now met separately, but whether or not they met together with Woodsworth, Irvine and Shaw is not clear. It would appear that, however organized, the U.F.A. group was now divided and to maintain the solidarity of its own parliamentary group the U.F.A. executive would have to effect a reconciliation; otherwise its total strength would be undermined. As the U.F.A. Annual Convention for 1925 approached, the battle-lines became drawn between the pro-gingerite and the anti-gingerite forces within the U.F.A., although exactly what was at issue seemed at times to be quite vague to many who participated in the clash.<sup>39</sup>

The Red Deer constituency association voted on November 13, 1924 for a resolution calling for agreement on



future political action between the two groups of U.F.A. representatives at Ottawa.<sup>40</sup> The issue at stake as it was discussed by this local was how effective a small group could be in the House of Commons if it was not part of the larger group of Progressives. Alfred Speakman, the M.P. for Red Deer, saw the issue as being a question of how the Progressive movement could be the most effective in Parliament and he stated that such effectiveness could only come about by working within a larger organization. In this case, Speakman said the best recourse for the U.F.A. members at Ottawa was to work through the Progressive caucus to effect legislation that would be beneficial to the farmers as an economic group. This was his reason for remaining within the caucus when the other five U.F.A. members had decided to withdraw.

Speakman's position was publicly debated at a meeting of two Calgary U.F.A. associations on December 9, 1924. Speakman and E. J. Garland participated in the debate, representing the two factions in the dispute. The two men tried to define their alternatives and both referred the audience back to the basis of independent political action as it had been agreed to at the Annual Conventions of 1919 and 1920.<sup>41</sup> Both Garland and Speakman expressed their adherence to the principles of group organization which was the basic point of departure of the Albertans from the main body of Progressives. Speakman emphasized his point of view by stating that an effective force in Parliament could only result from the co-operation of all like-minded individuals; therefore, the





U.F.A. members must co-operate with the Progressive group. Garland countered this by drawing attention to the fact that the main body of the Progressives was opposed to the independent political action expounded by the U.F.A. and to co-operate with the larger body from within the caucus could only result in the submerging of the U.F.A. principles by the Liberal-Progressive position of the main body. The first mistake the U.F.A. had made, according to Garland, was its failure to recognize that the other farm groups were not organized as the U.F.A. was. The second mistake was in joining the Progressive caucus in 1921 and participating in the Saskatoon and Winnipeg conferences. Garland summed up his position:

I did not join the 'Ginger' group. . . . I was in the group--the U.F.A. group, and in the group remained. If we are wrong, then the U.F.A. is wrong. If we are wrong, the U.F.A. has changed its mind since passing the 1919 resolution on political action.<sup>42</sup>

Henry Wise Wood also spoke at this meeting. In reference to the events of June, 1924 he stated the split was the result of a misunderstanding in regard to the principles of political action adopted in 1919. He then set the tone for what had to be done to reconcile the two factions in much the same manner as he had done at the 1920 convention by stating:

Broadly speaking, . . . we have the only real system that has ever been organized in opposition to the old political party system, and only one consideration should determine our decision--the good of the organization as a whole.<sup>43</sup>

Wood had very neatly circumvented the whole controversy by making the fundamental principle of independent political action very clear: the good of the U.F.A. organization as a whole must determine the basis of any action.



As the date of the U.F.A. convention approached, the maintaining of group solidarity in the House of Commons became the focus of the debate concerning the U.F.A. members involved in the Progressive split and the "ginger group". *The U.F.A.* editorially supported the idea of an aggressive, independent group influencing progressive legislation rather than pursuing power.<sup>44</sup> This position was censured by the East Edmonton U.F.A. local which in support of their member, D. K. Kellner, expressed sentiments that did not seem to be part of the U.F.A. political doctrine. Kellner, sounding more like a practical politician than an exponent of the U.F.A. political principles, argued that the Progressive pressure group tactics in the House of Commons would more readily obtain general benefits than the policy advocated by the "ginger group" and that the majority opinion was what got measures approved.<sup>45</sup> The resulting division over the issue of the "ginger group" made some resolution of the problem even more imperative as the issue now involved formal censure of the gingerites' position and the deviation of some from the guidelines of the 1919-1920 principles.

The U.F.A. Annual Convention was held in Calgary in January, 1925. In order to secure a truce between the two factions, the Federal Constituency Advisory Committee presented a lengthy resolution to the convention for its consideration. The terms of reference for the resolution were as follows:



Whereas, the 1919 U.F.A. Convention decided officially to go into political action, and passed a resolution authorizing the U.F.A. locals of each constituency to use the U.F.A. organization machinery for the purpose of nominating and electing a U.F.A. candidate in that district; and

Whereas, there have arisen misunderstandings and differences of opinions, and different interpretations in regard to the terms of that resolution, especially regarding the following points, viz.:

1. Whom the elected candidate represents in his official capacity;
2. On what basis he is supposed to co-operate with other U.F.A. members, and on what basis all U.F.A. members are supposed to co-operate in the interest of good legislation, with other political parties, groups or individuals;
3. In regard to "constituency autonomy" just how far this autonomy extends, and where it ceases. . . .<sup>46</sup>

Before the text of the resolution was introduced the federal members met and submitted a resolution of their own which declared:

That, while differences of opinion will naturally arise on specific questions, it is essential that the elected U.F.A. representatives, having in mind the guiding principles of the organization, shall maintain their solidarity as a group.

And that, recognizing their responsibility to the organization and the farming industry, they shall at all times be seized with the important duty which devolves on them of co-operating in finding practical methods whereby they can further the aims and objects of the organization.<sup>47</sup>

The *Calgary Albertan*, which gave the fullest account of the sequence of events on the day the resolution by the federal members was introduced, noted that the resolution, "totally unexpected by the convention, must have been prepared for sometime, for typewritten copies were immediately handed to the press."<sup>48</sup> The resolution was signed by all the federal members except Donald Kennedy who was in Ottawa on constituency business. Kennedy reportedly concurred with the





substance of the resolution and the document was greeted with great enthusiasm by the attending delegates.<sup>49</sup> Both the *Albertan* and the *Manitoba Free Press* correspondents to the convention reported the end of the "ginger group" with the *Free Press* noting the demise of the group taking place at 4:30 pm, January 22, 1925.<sup>50</sup>

The next day, January 23, the Federal Constituency Advisory Committee presented their resolution now known as the "Declaration of Principles of Political Action."<sup>51</sup> It was passed almost intact with the addition of one extra clause and the rewording of some sections. To some extent the U.F.A. gingerites, by not making an issue of the Progressive split during the Convention, had relinquished their uncompromising position on the question of constituency autonomy. The concept was subordinated by the following clause in the general resolution:

That each elected member who has been nominated by the U.F.A. organization in any constituency, shall be known only as a U.F.A. representative and shall be expected to attach himself to no other legislative group or party, and further, that each U.F.A. member is responsible directly to his own U.F.A. constituency organization and that organization is responsible to the U.F.A. as a whole.<sup>52</sup>

The federal members were in general agreement with the principle of group solidarity and the convention had given them the definition of how that responsibility was to be carried out. In the conflict between group solidarity and the "dissolvent constituency autonomy",<sup>53</sup> the latter had been altered so that the two would appear compatible. The member was still



responsible to his constituents as they were represented by the U.F.A. local. The local unit, in turn, was responsible to the U.F.A. central organization, the convention and/or the executive. This clause was intended to prevent any more "ginger groups" forming as a result of the question of constituency autonomy.

Co-operation with other groups or individuals was also allowed for, thereby affirming the freedom of co-operation the "ginger group" had advocated. This was outlined as follows:

That nothing in the above resolution shall be so construed as to prevent the U.F.A. Parliamentary group from acting with, and inviting into their group councils, individual Parliamentary members, especially those elected from other farmers' organizations, similar to the U.F.A., when a majority of the said U.F.A. group decide that it is expedient to do so.<sup>54</sup>

Majority rule within the group was therefore asserted but co-operation was also approved. Even within the limits of Wood's political thought the federal members were being allowed to continue their previous efforts and thus, the way was being paved for group co-operation for legislative purposes. This was stated not so much in terms of economic group organization as it was in terms of the existing U.F.A. federal group and other groups and independents in Parliament.<sup>55</sup> The compromise arrived at left the way open for the U.F.A. federal members to secure legislation using the best working agreement they as a group could devise with other groups.

The point at issue, where the direct responsibility



of the individual member lay, was clarified. This tended to set the U.F.A. group even further from the Manitoban attitude and to some degree, from the other members of the "ginger group". The basis of independent political action was now reasonably clear as all general principles were placed in subordination to the principles of political action as defined by the U.F.A. provincial organization. This development was not duplicated by the other provincial groups from which members of the "ginger group" came from.<sup>56</sup> Those members of the United Farmers of Ontario associated with the group were not subjected to any disciplinary measures because after 1923 the U.F.O. had withdrawn from direct political action although it continued to press for the formation of a political party which would work for the general goals of the farmers movement.<sup>57</sup> The organization and control that was left to exert direction of the federal members came from the constituency organization. Of the three U.F.O. members associated with the "ginger group", neither Good nor Elliott contested their seats in the 1925 federal election;<sup>58</sup> Agnes Macphail was re-nominated and returned to the House of Commons but without any direct affiliation with the provincial organization that had aided her election in 1921.<sup>59</sup> Ward and Campbell were not bothered by disciplinary measures from their respective provincial organizations for by 1924 there was no organization available to them to provide direction and control. Their responsibility was directly to the constituency association that had nominated them.<sup>60</sup> The U.F.A. members were the only





gingerites to be subjected to group discipline, as it was only in the United Farmers of Alberta organization that the issue of the Progressive split threatened the stability of the whole organization.

Therefore, by early 1925 and prior to the parliamentary session which began on February 5, the U.F.A. had defined its priorities for political action and its federal members went back to Ottawa armed with the principle of group solidarity. For the other "ginger group" members their only accountability was to their local constituency association. The "ginger group" as such no longer existed as the demands of June, 1924, had been realized to some extent, although the demands had also been compromised by the action of the U.F.A. federal members at the Calgary convention. The nature of the "ginger group" was altered by the Declaration of Principles of Political Action at the 1925 convention. While it is perhaps accurate to state that the personal relationships built up since 1922 had contributed to the co-operation and action of the "ginger group" in 1924, it would appear that the basis of co-operation had been worked out from the principles of independent political action defined by the Albertan approach to political organization and action. These principles had been tested and modified by the experience with the Progressive group in the House of Commons, and the Albertan attitude to political action, however modified, was determined the best. The relationship that was to develop



between the farmer and labour Members of Parliament was based on this formal impetus to co-operate with the specific organization to be worked out by the members involved. For the U.F.A. members this meant that they would have to maintain their group solidarity. The "ginger group" was dead but the "co-operating groups" were beginning to form.



## NOTES TO CHAPTER II

<sup>1</sup>W. L. Morton, *The Progressive Party in Canada* (Toronto, 1950), p. 189.

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 190-91.

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 183-84.

<sup>4</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 190-92.

<sup>5</sup>*The U.F.A.*, May 15, 1924, p. 11.

<sup>6</sup>Spencer, Gardiner, Coote, Garland and Kennedy of the U.F.A.; Good, Elliott and Macphail from Ontario; Ward and Bancroft from Manitoba; Campbell, Lewis and Gould from Saskatchewan.

<sup>7</sup>H. E. Spencer to Norman Smith, May 29, 1924, G.F.A., E. Norman Smith papers, "Henry Spencer" file. Smith was the editor of *The U.F.A.*

<sup>8</sup>E. J. Garland to the directors of the Bow River Constituency Association, June 16, 1924, E. J. Garland scrapbooks, in possession of Mr. Garland. Linear note suggests the letter was never sent as the Progressive split occurred soon after the letter was drafted.

<sup>9</sup>*Montreal Star*, June 9, 1924, p. 1; *The Progressive*, June 12, 1924, p. 1; editorial, *Alberta Labor News*, June 14, 1924, clipping in the Garland scrapbooks.

<sup>10</sup>Undated, untitled manuscript in the Garland scrapbooks, circa 1924, which states: "The last serious divergence of opinion was over the proposal of the Government to send a parliamentary delegation to the Wembley Exhibition in England." This action was determined to be a blatant act of patronage and as such, the Progressive support of the move was indefensible.

<sup>11</sup>For short biographical sketches of these six members, see appendix.

<sup>12</sup>*Calgary Albertan*, June 20, 1924, p. 1. The text of Forke's letter of reply was reprinted June 21 and indicates the letter by the six was received or written on June 14. There is a copy of the letter in the Henry Spencer papers, P.A.C. which is dated June 4, 1924. This copy has seven names in typescript as signators; in addition to the six there is the name of Preston Elliott (Dundas) from Ontario.





<sup>13</sup>Both letters appear in Morton, *Progressive Party*, p. 194-198. Forke's letter is edited with the reference to the correspondence of June 14 being deleted. The letter from the six may be found in the appendix to this thesis.

<sup>14</sup>*Manitoba Free Press*, June 18, 1924, p. 1; Morton, *Progressive Party*, p. 197 suggests the name was an allusion to the "Tory members who had criticized the Military Service Act in 1917." Spencer and Campbell had their own recollections on the origins of the term. Spencer said that a journalist drew an analogy between the group and ginger spice and the name seemed appropriate: G.F.A., interview with Henry Spencer by Una Maclean, January 2, 1962. Campbell said the group appeared to a journalist to be taking on the colour of Joseph Shaw's hair which was "fiery red, gingery": G.F.A., interview with M. N. Campbell by Sheilagh Jameson, June 8, 1962. The *Manitoba Free Press* reference would seem to support Campbell and Spencer in the sense the press created the term to describe the individuals as a group in some characteristic way, rather than as an echo of some previous set of individuals. This writer could find no antecedent reference to support Morton, and as he gives no reference source, it is difficult to locate the basis for this conclusion. However, there is a reference to the 1917 group in *Canadian Quotations and Phrases* (Toronto, 1952), compiled by R. Hamilton, p. 174 which suggests W. F. Nickle as the leader of the group. As well, there was a group in the Saskatchewan Grain Growers Association in 1922 which was described as a "ginger group", see Leo Courville, "The Saskatchewan Progressives" (unpublished M.A. thesis, University of Saskatchewan, 1971), p. 131. The Morton reference and the description in Courville's thesis suggests the term referred to a small dissident group within a larger group who take some kind of action contrary to that pursued by the larger group. It would seem, therefore, the term has some contemporary significance, especially for newspaper reporters but its origin is not clear.

<sup>15</sup>*The U.F.A.*, July 9, 1924, p. 4; *The Progressive*, July 10, 1924, p. 5.

<sup>16</sup>*Calgary Albertan*, July 5, 1924, p. 1. The full text of the letter was printed and is reproduced below. The article indicated Forke received the letter on the evening of July 4. A brief biographical sketch of the four members appears in the appendix.

<sup>17</sup>*Canadian Annual Review*, 1924-25, pp. 205-06.

<sup>18</sup>*The Progressive*, June 26, 1924, p. 4.



<sup>19</sup> *Calgary Albertan*, June 21, 1924, p. 4.

<sup>20</sup> *The Financial Post*, July 18, 1924, p. 10; *ibid.*, July 25, 1924, p. 10. For more background on this theme in the newspaper, see F. S. Chalmers, *A Gentleman of the Press* (Toronto, 1969), p. 230-41.

<sup>21</sup> The reference is to J. A. Stevenson, correspondent for a number of periodicals including the *Grain Growers' Guide* and a supposed intimate of the Albertans; see Ramsay Cook, ed., *The Dafoe-Sifton Correspondence, 1919-1927* (Altona, 1966), p. 115; Stevenson was also supposed to be an opponent of King; see Ross Harkness, *J. E. Atkinson of the Star* (Toronto, 1963), p. 161-62, and an ally of Meighen, see *The Canadian Forum*, December, 1924, p. 74.

<sup>22</sup> The reference is to William Irvine's newspaper, *The Nutcracker*.

<sup>23</sup> *Ottawa Citizen*, June 25, 1924, p. 16; *The U.F.A.*, July 9, 1924, p. 4.

<sup>24</sup> Morton, *Progressive Party*, p. 193.

<sup>25</sup> *The Progressive*, July 10, 1924, p. 2; *ibid.*, July 10, 1924, p. 12.

<sup>26</sup> Cf. Paul Sharp, *The Agrarian Revolt in Western Canada, A Survey Showing American Parallels* (Minneapolis, 1948), p. 178. Sharp says a resolution of the differences in the Progressive caucus took place in July, 1924. His source is the *Grain Growers' Guide*, July 8, 1925. The information is inaccurate as a check of the *Guide* reveals the report was in the 1925 edition of the periodical and therefore does not refer to the events of 1924 at all.

<sup>27</sup> *The U.F.A.*, July 2, 1924, pp. 12-13.

<sup>28</sup> Morton, *Progressive Party*, p. 200.

<sup>29</sup> *Winnipeg Tribune*, July 28, 1924, p. 1.

<sup>30</sup> The term as it is used here means the ten Progressive members who withdrew from caucus in 1924. In the strictest sense of the term it should only be applied to the six original members who withdrew, but the use of the term becomes such that it can be applied in almost any way without direct reference to specific individuals. Therefore, at its narrowest use this writer means the six, and at its broadest the ten. At no time does this writer consider that the "ginger group" includes Shaw, Woodsworth or Irvine.



<sup>31</sup>Quoted in K. McNaught, *A Prophet in Politics, A Biography of J. S. Woodsworth* (Toronto, 1950), p. 165.

<sup>32</sup>*The U.F.A.*, October 1, 1925, p. 6.

<sup>33</sup>Martin Robin, *Radical Politics and Canadian Labour, 1880-1930* (Kingston, 1968), p. 202-03.

<sup>34</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>35</sup>Editorial from the *Edmonton Journal*, reprinted in *The Progressive*, July 17, 1924, p. 5.

<sup>36</sup>*House of Commons Debates*, 1924, IV, p. 3544. Another speaker later rose to defend Robb's position: " . . . [I object] that the hon. member for Medicine Hat (Mr. Gardiner) should intimate that if no member from the so-called Labour Party in the House is sent, the working people of this country will not be represented. I would say this: In every case where a member of this House, and I think this includes them all, has among his constituents working people, he represents that class whichever one of the various parties he belongs to, and I resent any such significance being given to the representation that is being sent over to the British Empire Exhibition." *Ibid.*, p. 3546.

<sup>37</sup>Morton, *Progressive Party*, p. 163; McNaught, *Prophet in Politics*, p. 123.

<sup>38</sup>A new interpretation of the nature of the split and when it took place is presented by John Hart, "William Irvine and Radical Politics in Canada" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Guelph, 1972), pp. 130-32. Hart contends the split took place in April, 1925 because the Progressives, in the view of the minority, were not following the program of economic reform they had been elected to implement. In view of the letter of the six to Robert Forke in June, 1924, Professor Morton's work on the National Progressive Party and the above outline, it is difficult to accept this interpretation.

<sup>39</sup>"Letter to the editor," *The U.F.A.*, December 15, 1924, pp. 10-11.

<sup>40</sup>*Calgary Albertan*, November 14, 1924, p. 1; *The U.F.A.*, December 1, 1924, p. 24.

<sup>41</sup>*The U.F.A.*, December 15, 1924, p. 4. Details about this debate are from this account.

<sup>42</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>43</sup>*Ibid.*





<sup>44</sup>*Ibid.*, December 15, 1924, p. 3; William Irvine to Norman Smith, December 15, 1924, G.F.A., E. Norman Smith papers, "William Irvine" file. Irvine suggested the most important business the forthcoming convention had to consider was the reconciliation of the U.F.A. members in order to preserve group solidarity. The independence of the group in Parliament and its efficient organization were too important to let slip away as no reform would be possible with a fragmented group, at least according to Irvine. A copy of the letter was apparently also sent to Wood.

<sup>45</sup>*Edmonton Journal*, January 8, 1925, p. 1.

<sup>46</sup>*Calgary Albertan*, January 22, 1925, p. 2.

<sup>47</sup>*The U.F.A.*, February 2, 1925, p. 12; *Calgary Albertan*, January 23, 1925, p. 1.

<sup>48</sup>*Calgary Albertan*, January 23, 1925, p. 10.

<sup>49</sup>*The U.F.A.*, February 2, 1925, p. 12.

<sup>50</sup>The death is recorded in only two secondary works, W. K. Rolph, *Henry Wise Wood of Alberta* (Toronto, 1950), p. 119, and Morton, *Progressive Party*, p. 222.

<sup>51</sup>Morton, *Progressive Party*, pp. 223-24 contains the original resolution by the Committee. This resolution had seven clauses while the final resolution was amended and an eighth clause added, see *The U.F.A.*, February 2, 1925, p. 12, and the appendix to this thesis.

<sup>52</sup>Clause five of the Declaration of Principles of Political Action.

<sup>53</sup>Morton, *Progressive Party*, p. 222.

<sup>54</sup>Clause four of the Declaration of Principles of Political Action. Cf. Hart, "William Irvine", p. 176. Hart has interpreted the resolution as "forbidding the UFA Federal Members from co-operating with any other group in the Commons." The source is *The U.F.A.*, February 2, 1925. Because of this misinterpretation of the intent of the resolution, one tends to question the significance Hart places on the role of Irvine as his interpretation is not in accord with the evidence.

<sup>55</sup>*Calgary Albertan*, January 23, 1925, p. 10.

<sup>56</sup>In this instance, the writer is using the term "ginger group" in its broadest sense, that is, as a reference to the original members of the group along with the four who joined the secession from caucus in July.



<sup>57</sup>Morton, *Progressive Party*, pp. 211-16.

<sup>58</sup>*Parliamentary Guide*, 1926, pp. 217, 234-35. This writer is unable to find evidence that Elliott was defeated in the 1925 election, cf. Margaret Stewart and Doris French, *Ask No Quarter, A Biography of Agnes Macphail* (Toronto, 1959), p. 82.

<sup>59</sup>Stewart and French, *Ask No Quarter*, p. 85.

<sup>60</sup>Morton, *Progressive Party*, pp. 226-34; Rolph, *Wood*, p. 117.



### CHAPTER III

#### NEW RULES FOR THE GAME: THE FORMATION OF THE CO-OPERATING GROUPS, 1925-1926

The U.F.A. members, gathered together in Ottawa for the 1925 session of Parliament, met February 6 to discuss the convention's Declaration of Principles and to adopt an agreement of their own in accordance with the convention's direction that they maintain the group's solidarity. After two days of discussion a committee of three consisting of D. F. Kellner, Alfred Speakman and George Coote was appointed to draw up a resolution " . . . as to how best the Alberta members could co-operate with any Member or Members who were elected on a 'local autonomy basis'." <sup>1</sup> The committee composition was significant as it reflected the attitudes toward the Progressive split within the U.F.A., with Kellner being an anti-gingerite, Speakman the moderate, and of course Coote was pro-gingerite. <sup>2</sup> The U.F.A. federal members thus began to prepare the way for the implementation of their ideas on independent political action in the House of Commons.

The committee submitted their resolution for approval by the whole U.F.A. group on February 10. It read:

That the U.F.A. members in conformity with the agreement arrived at in Calgary, and with a view of maintaining group solidarity hereby agree to:

1st- Form and maintain an organized group composed of





the elected U.F.A. members which group shall meet from time to time to discuss and if possible agree upon matters of common interest.

2nd- That, unless impracticable from the circumstances of the case, no U.F.A. member shall take action in the House which would implicate the group as a whole or any member thereof, without laying the matter first before the group for discussion; and be it further provided that the Alberta members declare their willingness to co-operate with other groups or individuals wherever practical for the purpose of carrying out desirable legislation.<sup>3</sup>

The resolution as worded was agreed to and a working agreement among the U.F.A. members for the coming session was provided. In order to maintain their group solidarity the U.F.A. members also set up their own machinery of parliamentary organization. As they were not part of any larger group, but considered themselves to be a distinct group co-operating with other like-minded members, they appointed one of their number to act on the group's behalf in the placement of U.F.A. members on committees of the House:

. . . George Coote moved, L. H. Jelliff seconded that we appoint someone to represent Alberta in placing our Members on House Committees. This was carried. Moved by E. J. Garland, seconded by L. H. Jelliff that such official work direct from the Alberta unit and be responsible to same. . . . On a vote being taken. . . [Alfred Speakman] was declared elected.<sup>4</sup>

It is interesting to note that the motions for independent machinery of organization and responsibility came from Garland and Coote. As former gingerites they had asserted the group unit as the authority governing the whole group's action in Parliament. The point at issue now for these ex-gingerites was the preservation of the group's solidarity which could only be maintained by remaining outside



of a larger group and having the direct basis of accountability to the U.F.A. group. The group continued to maintain their willingness to co-operate with other groups if specific issues warranted it. In this way the former gingerites remained consistent with the principles behind the Progressive split of 1924 and the U.F.A. Declaration of Principles of 1925.

The resolution of February 10, however, was not carried out during the 1925 session. The five former gingerites reportedly remained outside the Progressive caucus while the other five members of the U.F.A. group continued to attend. The report of this development in the *Manitoba Free Press* noted that the U.F.A. members ceased to meet as a group shortly after the above agreement went into effect.<sup>5</sup> The *Free Press* questioned whether or not this action was a contravention of the Declaration of Principles and those members who continued to attend the Progressive caucus gave the impression they felt the Declaration was not in effect until after the next federal election. These U.F.A. members did not state this explicitly and it was only the newspaper's inference that substantiated this interpretation.<sup>6</sup> Apparently since each faction had five members and therefore there was no majority opinion, each group felt it could allow the individual member to determine his own action as this did not necessarily impinge on the group's unity.<sup>7</sup> The internal disagreement within the group did not mean a fundamental difference of opinion on the question of independent political



action as defined at the 1925 convention. Even if there were some U.F.A. members within the Progressive caucus it did not mean that they agreed with what was happening to that body, that is, the gradual absorption of the Progressives by the Liberal party. The problems of the U.F.A. federal group were ones of internal organization and discipline, not principle, and those members who attended the Progressive caucus were not about to be enticed by the Liberals:

The action of the 1925 convention, while it had failed to restore unity, at least had made it clear that as far as the U.F.A. was concerned, no federal member could openly seek Liberal endorsement and at the same time expect to receive the support of the U.F.A. organization.<sup>8</sup>

As a result there developed what, for all intents and purposes, appeared to be the re-formation of the "ginger group". The close identification of the five U.F.A. members who did not join the Progressive caucus with Campbell, Ward, Elliott, Good and Macphail and their association with Irvine, Woodsworth and Shaw has been described by Professor McNaught in terms of the legislative proposals put forward by this "group" during the 1925 session.<sup>9</sup> But there was a fundamental difference between the association of 1924 and that of 1925. In 1925 the U.F.A. members had the sanction of the Declaration of Principles to co-operate with other groups and with individuals from other groups who recognized the basis of political action supported by the U.F.A. This primarily involved those members who had participated in the Progressive split of the year previous. In all then there were thirteen members who





felt they were not part of any party in the House of Commons, but were the representatives of constituted economic groups and advocates of the individual member's responsibility to his local constituency. For the former gingerites from the U.F.A. this meant they represented the organized farmers of Alberta through the agency of the U.F.A. and that they would work with, but not from within another organization. The U.F.A. members, the other five Progressive dissenters, Woodsworth, Irvine and Shaw were not part of any recognized group or party in the House and as such they felt they were not equally represented in some aspects of the business of the House.<sup>10</sup> When the party representation on the Special Committee investigating ocean shipping rates was appointed in March, 1925, W. C. Good, as the spokesman for the thirteen, took issue with the choice of who would be on that committee.

Good, supported by Robert Gardiner, noted that although the Special Committee had eight Liberals, three Conservatives and four Progressives as members, no one from the thirteen had been appointed.<sup>11</sup> Since none of the thirteen were a part of the three other groups, Gardiner wondered what steps would be taken to rectify the imbalance. After much debate one of the Progressives withdrew his name and with the agreement of the House, Joseph Shaw was named to replace the Progressive member.<sup>12</sup> The thirteen were not asking to be recognized as a separate group in the House nor were they so identified; they were only asking that they be given equal representation in this specific instance. The



thirteen did not look upon themselves as a separate group but just as thirteen individual members who felt their constituents should have representation on the committee. This appears to have been the only occurrence of such a demand during the session.<sup>13</sup>

Any further deterioration of the relationship between the members of the U.F.A. group was arrested by the main vote on the budget of 1925.<sup>14</sup> Had events continued there might have occurred a further breach in the solidarity of the group but as a result of the vote, attention was shifted away from the thirteen independents and focused on the seventeen members of the Progressive caucus who supported the Liberals in defiance of the majority caucus decision that the Progressives should vote against the budget. There was another split in the Progressive group which saw the departure of some of these members. J. F. Johnstone resigned as chief whip, thereby clearing away one of the more objectionable personalities from the Progressive ranks, at least in the eyes of the ten who had withdrawn from caucus in 1924. By the end of the session the Progressive group no longer had any essential unity. Robert Forke, attempting to make the best of a bad situation, announced at the close of the session that a definite basis of co-operation of all members, implying those who had left the caucus in 1924 and those who remained, had been outlined and approved. The basis of co-operation bore the familiar ring of the Albertan attitude to political action:



In harmony with the principles of constituency autonomy, members from each province will work in association with the provincial locals in carrying forward and perfecting the work of organization. . . . The group is thus in a position to present a more united front than at any time since the first division occurred.<sup>15</sup>

The polarization of the Liberal-Progressives and the Liberals together marked the end of the Progressive experiment in Parliament using the Manitoban basis of political action. The parliamentary group was so fragmented that it was unable to recover. The developments left a vacuum into which the U.F.A. members entered and they seized control of what was left of the Progressive group. With the calling of a general election for October 29, 1925 the U.F.A. began to find a fuller degree of group solidarity.<sup>16</sup> This election reduced the U.F.A. representation in the House of Commons by one, to nine members, while total Progressive representation shrank to fifteen.<sup>17</sup> The U.F.A. members-elect met in Calgary on November 25 to plan their parliamentary policy and organization for the new Parliament. In reply to some speculation that the U.F.A. members intended to co-operate with only the Liberals, Robert Gardiner issued a statement on behalf of the federal group:

The U.F.A. . . . is a distinct Parliamentary unit, and is not a part of any political party. It is not under any obligation to give support to the Liberals, Conservatives or any other party or group. It stands prepared to co-operate with any or all of these groups in the interests of good legislation.<sup>18</sup>

It was of no concern to the U.F.A. group that the parliamentary situation was once again a minority government. In point





of fact, the situation would require the principles of political action advocated by the U.F.A. as it was only through the co-operation of groups that good legislation would be assured. Unfortunately the politics of the old parties were to disrupt this experiment in group government when this idea was put to the test.<sup>19</sup>

The U.F.A. group met in Ottawa on January 4, 1926. It was decided " . . . to co-operate to the fullest extent possible with the other farmer members, at the same time taking care to keep [the] Provincial unit intact."<sup>20</sup> The U.F.A. group also met with members of the "Forke group"<sup>21</sup> who had been re-elected. It was decided that the organization of the U.F.A.-Forke groups in Parliament would be on a provincial basis for the sole purpose of co-operating to achieve good legislation. Henry Spencer was elected the whip of the re-organized U.F.A.-Progressive group which was composed of members from Alberta, Manitoba and Saskatchewan.<sup>22</sup> A central committee with a representative from each provincial group was established: Robert Gardiner for Alberta, John Evans from Saskatchewan and J. L. Brown from Manitoba. Robert Forke was elected as the House leader. The U.F.A. group at a later meeting elected Gardiner as their chairman and Spencer as the secretary for their parliamentary group. These were the same positions the two men had held in the last Parliament.<sup>23</sup>

The U.F.A. group as a whole had re-entered the formal association of western Progressives and the new grouping



stressed co-operation and the preservation of group solidarity on a provincial basis. The influence of the U.F.A. members was now in its ascendancy as they now had a more dominant role in the new caucus. The U.F.A. members were no longer in an appreciable minority in the new group since they were nine in a group of twenty-four, whereas in the previous Parliament they had been ten out of a total of sixty-four. A press release was prepared and issued two months later on March 5 in order to clarify the position of the various groups involved. It read:

To prevent any misunderstanding and speculation by the press, it has been thought advisable to issue a statement regarding the position of the Progressive group and its relation to the Government.

After the general election held on October 29th it transpired that parliament contained a number of Groups none of which had a majority over all. This is a situation unknown in the history of Canada, and presented obvious difficulties requiring new methods for their solution, if the best interests of the country are to be served and parliament allowed to function.

That this can be best accomplished by co-operation between the various groups in parliament or by co-operation between some of the groups is apparent, and steps were taken to establish a basis for co-operation.

It is accepted by the co-operating groups that the basis must be legislative, and that in order to be effective consultation is essential. It is therefore the intention of the Progressive group to co-operate openly with the Government on this basis.

Coalition or fusion of the Groups participating is not contemplated.

"Henry Spencer,  
Robert Forke."24

The statement was quite terse in explaining the significance of the last sentence. The "co-operating groups"<sup>25</sup> participating in the Progressive group were the farmer members from the three western provinces. The group rhetoric was



significant as it made clear the ascendancy of the U.F.A. ideas over the parliamentary group. No longer outnumbered in the Progressive caucus, the U.F.A. had managed to force a re-organization and its members could finally exert the energy it had been expending fruitlessly against the other Progressives. Now the U.F.A. could demonstrate the principles of democratic group action.

While the nature of the internal organization of the Progressive group was being determined, a far more important set of developments was taking place regarding the balance of power held by the "co-operating groups". The twenty-four U.F.A. and Progressive members, along with Woodsworth and his new Labour colleague, A. A. Heaps, were the focus of attention. The Liberal government of Mackenzie King had decided to wait until Parliament met in order to determine the fate of the minority government.<sup>26</sup> The U.F.A. group took up seats on the Speaker's left, a move that was designed to emphasize their independence in the House.<sup>27</sup> The "co-operating groups" attempted to obtain the Liberal and Conservative point of view on a fourteen point program by sending identical letters to King and Meighen to ascertain their respective attitudes on each point. On the basis of the replies it became apparent that the "co-operating groups" would probably support the Liberals, but in a showdown of votes it was not quite clear exactly who held the balance of power.<sup>28</sup>

The situation, therefore, remained fluid. A Liberal proposal for a coalition between themselves and the





"co-operating groups", offering the groups two cabinet positions, was rejected because of U.F.A. objections.<sup>29</sup> At issue for the U.F.A. members was once again the principles of independent political action they represented. The U.F.A. members could accept consultation with the Liberals as did happen in the discussions between the "co-operating groups" and the Liberals on the legislation that was to be mentioned in the Speech from the Throne,<sup>30</sup> but nothing more. The U.F.A. members were clearly asserting themselves and taking the initiative in obtaining legislation by directly influencing the government through the balance of power held by the "co-operating groups". The alignment of 1924-1925 was not in evidence during the 1926 session, that is, the alignment of the thirteen independent members. Woodsworth continued to produce a number of motions and resolutions during the 1926 session and he had indicated in a speech early in the session that he favoured a co-operative arrangement of government rather than party government by suggesting the government be a council responsible to the House and not to any party.<sup>31</sup> As long as Woodsworth continued to advocate this concept and proposed specific legislation in line with that which could be supported by the "co-operating groups" and the U.F.A. in particular, he would probably maintain their support. It is therefore difficult to accept the suggestion that Woodsworth had convinced the Progressive group through the former gingerites that he, and not they, held the "initiative of opposition".<sup>32</sup> The "co-operating groups" had a direct involvement in the



preparation of the 1926 budget which would seem to indicate they were taking the initiative themselves.<sup>33</sup> Also the "co-operating groups" and the Labour group seem to have been negotiating separately with the Liberals. The groups had their own priorities and they went about securing the desired legislation using the apparatus of the central committee.<sup>34</sup>

Into this pattern of reasonable affiliation and co-operation came the seeds of discontent. By the intertwining of issues, the transfer of natural resources to Alberta, the report of the Special Committee on the Department of Customs and Excise, and the always present sense of party loyalty, the fragile balance of co-operative government was upset. The "co-operating groups", although they had agreed to support measures within the Liberal legislative program, found the issues difficult to resolve in terms of principle and political beliefs. The transfer of natural resources was an immediate concern to the U.F.A. members. Although a compromise regarding the transfer was reached by the federal government, the U.F.A. federal members and the U.F.A. provincial government early in the 1926 session, it became an issue again in June. As a result, A. M. Boutillier and W. T. Lucas, two of the U.F.A. members, withdrew their support of the Liberal government.<sup>35</sup> As for the Customs investigation, the Special Committee had placed the "co-operating groups" in an awkward position as the inquiry involved government corruption.<sup>36</sup> The committee was composed



of four members from both the Liberal and Conservative parties along with a single Progressive, D. M. Kennedy. The manipulations of party loyalty by the partisan members of the committee placed Kennedy in the position of having the deciding vote. From this situation and with the committee's submission of its report to the House, the test came for both the idea of co-operative group government and the degree to which the U.F.A. was able to maintain its group solidarity.

The Conservative members of the committee introduced a motion of censure against the Minister responsible for the Customs Department, George Boivin, for his handling of a charge of possession of smuggled liquor.<sup>37</sup> Mackenzie King was able to persuade some of the Progressive members, including Gardiner and Spencer, to try to convince Kennedy that he should not support the Conservative motion. As a result Kennedy did not, but he did introduce a motion of his own which was worded in such a way that it criticized the Liberals and a Conservative member for attempting to obtain ministerial favours. The party members on the committee closed ranks in defence of their own and the motion was defeated 8-1. When the report from the committee was presented to the House on June 22, H. H. Stevens moved an amendment that was similar in tone to Kennedy's but without the implications to the members of the two parties. The immediate result was a quandry for the "co-operating groups": were they to support the government to avoid an election, or remain consistent with their principles. As the debate wore on it became apparent





that the groups were becoming divided as to what stance they should take both collectively and individually. Not even an amendment by Woodsworth to the Stevens' amendment which would have taken the pressure from the Liberals by the appointment of a Royal Commission helped to resolve the matter.<sup>38</sup> The motion appeared to make it impossible for some members of the "co-operating groups" to act for fear of being inconsistent and voting for something they in all conscience and conviction could not accept. The Woodsworth amendment was defeated 117-115; Coote and Macphail had not voted; and five of the Progressive group, including Kennedy and Campbell, had voted with the majority. The "co-operating groups" began to lose their unity.

A further complication arose when W. R. Fansher, a Saskatchewan Progressive, moved another amendment to Stevens' motion. Fansher's motion combined the Stevens-Woodsworth amendments but it was questioned as to whether or not it was in order. A vote was taken and the new amendment was declared to be in order. Macphail and Coote voted in favour of allowing this amendment to stand. King then tried to have an adjournment called in order to muster his support before a final vote could be taken on Fansher's motion. The voting divisions were becoming dependent on a single vote one way or the other. When the adjournment was voted on in the early hours of June 26, it came as a result of Kennedy not voting and the House adjourned for the weekend. The details of King's



weekend maneuvers are not relevant to this discussion,<sup>39</sup> but when sometime on June 29, after King had resigned and Meighen was sworn in as Prime Minister, the "co-operating groups" met in caucus. While the meeting was in progress, Forke was summoned by the Governor-General to a conference. As a precaution and as an indication of what their attitude would be to the new government, the groups sent a memorandum along with Forke. It read:

Motion agreed to by Progressive group:

That we assist the new administration in completing the business of the session.

That we are in agreement of [*sic*] the necessity of continuing the investigation into the customs and excise department by a judicial commission.

We believe it advisable that no dissolution should take place until the judicial commission has finished its investigation into the Customs and Excise Department, and that Parliament be summoned to deal with the report.<sup>40</sup>

A delegation of the Progressive group members, headed by E. J. Garland, was selected at the same meeting to interview Meighen that day and to determine how he proposed to form his government. When they met with Meighen, he told them of the procedure he intended to follow which the group reportedly accepted. In the House sitting of June 29 another amendment was proposed to Stevens', this time by the Liberals. This motion would have removed the censure section from the Stevens amendment and instead allowed for the appointment of a Royal Commission. It was defeated. Finally the division on the Stevens' amendment was called and it passed with a majority of ten votes. The former government was formally censured. In all, ten Progressives supported the majority



vote, the five who had voted against the Woodsworth motion along with Coote, Gardiner, Garland, Macphail and Spencer.

On June 30, during a motion to go into the Committee of Supply, King moved a vote of no-confidence in the new government's tariff policy. The motion was lost by seven votes with only Macphail of the fluctuating five voting with the Liberals. The loose-knit arrangement of the Progressive group in a situation of blatant partyism was showing the fundamental weakness of independent political action based on individual responsibility when confronted with the realities of the party system of government. It was also testing the group solidarity of the U.F.A. members when members of the group were voting one way or another on any issue for individual reasons. While the old parties wrestled for power, the non-partisan groups were being caught up in the machinations. Added to this was the fact that the long hours were beginning to take their toll from certain individuals in the groups.<sup>41</sup> But the last act was now staged when a new motion was introduced by J. A. Robb, one that questioned the constitutionality of the new ministry.

The attitude of the Progressive group, particularly the five who, for a variety of reasons, had tried to maintain a consistent stand throughout the debates and the votes of June, was defensive. It was defensive in the sense they were wary of being trapped by the party manipulations to hold power. The five were really interested in obtaining good legislation





and the U.F.A. members were interested in making the co-operative group approach to government work. But by the focusing of the balance of power on the whole group of ten, who sometimes voted together, sometimes against one another, co-operation was lost, and therefore the legislative programs were lost. The vote on the Robb motion illustrates this. When the vote on the motion came at two o'clock on the morning of July 2, it carried 96-95. In what might have been a carefully orchestrated vote if party and group discipline had been in force, one Progressive, T. W. Bird who was paired with Kennedy and tradition-bound not to vote, did vote and the government was defeated. In this critical vote the Conservatives were supported by Boutillier, Lucas and Fansher while Campbell and W. J. Ward were paired. Kennedy and Bird were paired when Kennedy had to leave the House due to illness. The Liberal motion was supported by Coote, Gardiner, Garland, Macphail and Spencer. These members had decided the ministry was unconstitutional and they voted from that conviction thinking that there was substance in the Liberal contention.<sup>42</sup>

The Progressive group was divided three ways in the vote.<sup>43</sup> There were those who had remained loyal to the Conservatives, there were those who had remained loyal to the Liberals, and finally, there was the grouping of Garland, Macphail, Gardiner, Spencer and Coote, the members who felt they were free to vote as they would depending on the issue and the individual conscience. This last group knew the



traditions of Parliament, in this case what the result would be from the loss of the vote. Although they did not accept that decision with its accompanying tradition of dissolution, they had not effected any change by their independent action. Instead of withdrawing from any involvement with the obvious partisanship of the proceedings, the group implicated itself in Meighen's decision to dissolve the House and call for an election.

The Progressive group held a caucus on the evening of July 2 to decide their future course of action. A committee consisting of E. J. Garland and Robert Gardiner was appointed to draw up a statement of the group's position on the dissolution and the matter of the June 29 memorandum as its statement of support for the Conservative administration in these new circumstances might be misleading to the public.<sup>44</sup>

E. J. Garland defended the Progressive group as a whole in a press statement on July 3. His defence rested on how the group and its individual members had regarded the situation.<sup>45</sup> The memorandum of June 29 was made public although its contents had been leaked to the press previously; it was made public as it was the basis of Garland's justification for the group's actions. The Progressive group, according to Garland, had tried to assist the Meighen government but the legality of the ministry became the central dilemma in continuing that support. This had been discovered when the Robb motion was introduced which was two days after the memorandum had been drafted. The major issue, because it was assumed the



ministry was not legally constituted, was the dissolution of Parliament when so much legislation of importance remained. Once again the Albertan attitude to the parliamentary system was evident. Their pressing of an issue before reform of the system was implemented had weakened their argument. Their concepts of what constituted reasonable political action in the House of Commons had interfered with, not changed, the parliamentary system. Immediate demands based on the principle of independent political action had rendered the principle ineffective and the brief excursion into group policy-making by co-operation was cut short. But it was Meighen they blamed, not themselves.

In order to become an effective agent for these ideas of political action, the Progressive group, or the "co-operating groups", and particularly the five members associated with the changing vote pattern, would have to learn to use the techniques of the parliamentary system and make gradual changes to implement reform. That would involve reform of not only the parliamentary system but it would also require a clearer definition of what role the individual member should have within a parliamentary group. That necessarily would affect the nature of co-operation as it would establish the priority of either group or individual action. If the group was to learn from this experience, it would mean acceptance of the parliamentary system and put them on the road back to partyism.





The question of the individual's role in relation to the group was once again a problem for the U.F.A. organization. The individual action of its members in terms of their association and identification with the Progressive group had seriously hampered co-operation to secure legislation. The U.F.A. federal members had tried to maintain their group solidarity during the 1926 session but the need to further clarify group and individual latitude in decision-making was now important as an election had been called for September 14, 1926. The need for group solidarity was once more referred back to the provincial organization for direction in this matter.

A conference of the central executive, representatives from the federal constituency associations and the federal members was held in Calgary on July 23, 1926.<sup>46</sup> The conference had before it two items of business. The first was the legislative program the U.F.A. members would seek in the new Parliament when elected. The second was a resolution to have the federal members act in accordance with the 1925 Declaration of Principles. The resolution was as follows:

This Conference recommends that every U.F.A. candidate be pledged to the Declaration of Principles passed at the Annual Convention, 1925, and that in accordance with the spirit and letter of this resolution we recommend that the U.F.A. members at Ottawa preserve their identity as a U.F.A. group unit in the next House of Commons, and do not in any manner amalgamate, or become part of any other party or group not organized on the same basis for political action as the U.F.A. That a copy of this resolution be sent to every Federal Constituency Association for consideration and also be brought before the Annual Convention.



The key word in the clarification was identity. The previous elements of local autonomy and group solidarity had been encompassed into one concept, the preservation of the U.F.A. group identity at Ottawa. The matter of constituency autonomy was discussed but the issue was superceded by the "principles of organization", the responsibility of the individual as it had been defined in the Declaration of Principles. By fixing the responsibility of the individual to the group organization which in turn was the agent from which co-operation with other groups stemmed, the Declaration of Principles and the above resolution made the U.F.A. a distinct parliamentary unit and its identity had to be kept separate. The federal members in future could co-operate *with, but not from within* other groups. The report of the meeting suggested that some of the federal members thought the distinction would avoid the events of the last Parliament. The problem of working with other groups, for example, the Forke Progressives, could be avoided and each group was then responsible for how it gave its support rather than all being identified together. The U.F.A. group would be kept separate and therefore not accountable for how the other groups voted or what action they took. The U.F.A. federal members, six years after Henry Wise Wood had first defined the basis of independent political action for the U.F.A., finally seemed to have understood the essential point of group political action. By 1926, however, the assertion of their independence was more symbolic than anything else.



The federal election returned eleven U.F.A. members,<sup>47</sup> three Progressives from Saskatchewan, four from Manitoba and two from Ontario. There were three Labour members in the House, Woodsworth, Heaps and H. B. Adshead from Calgary. Just after the opening of the new Parliament on December 9, 1926 and in the spirit and letter of the July resolution and the Declaration of Principles, the U.F.A. group wrote to John Evans, the new chairman of the Progressive group (the Manitoba and Saskatchewan Progressives, not the Liberal-Progressives), Woodsworth as the chairman of the Labour group, and to the two Ontario members.<sup>48</sup> The U.F.A. members extended an invitation to co-operate on a legislative basis and enclosed a copy of the Declaration of Principles so that those invited

. . . may fully realize that in seeking to co-operate with you, we are carrying out the expressed wishes of our movement, and also that you may know the outlined plan of co-operation therein set forth, and within which limits it will be our desire to remain.<sup>49</sup>

Accordingly, a meeting of the Farmer and Labour groups took place in Room 607 of the Parliament Buildings, Ottawa, on December 16, 1926.<sup>50</sup> There were sixteen members present: nine from the U.F.A., one from Manitoba, three from Saskatchewan along with Agnes Macphail, H. B. Adshead and J. S. Woodsworth. Four other members were recorded as absentees. The minutes from the meeting indicate two items of business. Adshead was appointed as the recording secretary for general conferences of the groups involved and a resolution outlining co-operation between the groups was adopted:





A resolution outlining co-operation between the different Groups was submitted from a committee of three. This was discussed clause by clause and eventually accepted by those present.<sup>51</sup>

Documentation to account for the appointment and the composition of the committee is not available, nor is there any conclusive evidence as to what made up the substance of the resolution.<sup>52</sup> However, a formal basis of co-operation was apparently arrived at, and it can be assumed that it was for the purpose of securing legislation, if previous evidence of co-operative arrangements are cited as evidence. The co-operation was defined within the limits of group political action where the identity of each group would be preserved.

There were two contemporary interpretations of what the arrangement signified. Woodsworth saw the beginnings of a future political organization which would form the vanguard in spearheading the new social order.<sup>53</sup> Writing to Theodore Debs, the brother of Eugene Debs, Woodsworth stated:

You may be interested in knowing that we have now three labor members in the Federal House and have been able to establish a close working co-operation with the left wing of the Farmers group so that we now number a group of over twenty. We believe that we are thus laying the foundation on which in the future a strong organization may be built.<sup>54</sup>

In view of the U.F.A. position, defining the limits of co-operation in terms of an independent group and on a legislative basis, one wonders how this new group of twenty was to provide the basis for a strong organization. The co-operation of organized groups as it manifested itself in the Farmer and Labour groups of the House of Commons continued to suggest to



Woodsworth that a larger organization was possible even though unity of purpose beyond co-operation was still missing. Perhaps Woodsworth was being overly optimistic about the groups' potential.<sup>55</sup>

Woodsworth's interpretation can be compared with that of William Irvine who was the first U.F.A. federal member to report on the activities of the U.F.A. group during the short December session. Writing for *The U.F.A.* he stated:

There were many encouraging evidences during the short session of Parliament just held that United Farmers, Labour and Independent groups will find a way to work together. Indeed, conferences were held with this in view and the basis of such a co-operative agreement is being worked out, and no doubt the groups will be working harmoniously at the next sitting of the House in February, 1927. . . . Co-operation among groups, or party affiliation with one or other of the parties, is inevitable, in my opinion. . . . I regard co-operation in politics as the coming substitute for the old party system.<sup>56</sup>

Irvine went on to describe his own proposal to create leadership in the "co-operating groups" as he termed them. It was a measure that would be subsequently adopted:<sup>57</sup>

. . . The leadership of the co-operating groups would be taken in the House for the time being by the individual who, a conference of the group decides, is best fitted to deal with the subject under discussion. In this way we should always have leadership, but a leadership which would rotate according to the issue and the particular ability of individual members. Since the co-operation among the groups is chiefly on a basis of legislation and during sessions of Parliament, the above idea, if adopted might work out more efficiently than the old idea of leadership practised by the old system.<sup>58</sup>

The U.F.A. Annual Convention of January, 1927 passed the substance of the resolution recommended to it by those who had attended the Calgary conference on July 23, 1926. It



recommended that " . . . the U.F.A. members at Ottawa preserve their identity as a U.F.A. group unit in the next House of Commons, and do not in any manner amalgamate, or become part of any party or group not organized on the same basis for political action as the U.F.A."<sup>59</sup> The U.F.A. federal members now sat as a separate group in the House of Commons representing the agrarian interests of Alberta. Although the "co-operating groups" no longer held the balance of power as the Progressive groups had in the previous two Parliaments, the groups felt that their co-operation would give them an effective voice in the influencing of legislation. The Progressive group as such no longer existed although some Members of Parliament still carried that designation. The parliamentary strength of the "co-operating groups" was the U.F.A. group and the organizational basis was that advocated by the U.F.A. with its new-found sense of priorities. The "co-operating groups" represented independent political action through the preservation of group identity and the securing of legislation through co-operation of organized groups. The results of the 1926 election and the return of a majority Liberal government ensured that the disruptive influence of the U.F.A. basis of political action would not have a substantial effect in the new Parliament. The Alberta members, however, continued to adhere to the ideas of occupational representation and in some cases, constituency autonomy.<sup>60</sup> For the U.F.A. the themes of co-operation and group identity were to become





key issues in the organization's affiliation with the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation. Once again the idea of independent political action as defined by the U.F.A. would have its effect on this attempt to form a national political organization. It was by no means a coincidence that the spokesmen for independent political action based on the Albertan attitude were former members of the "ginger group".



## NOTES TO CHAPTER III

<sup>1</sup>"Minutes of the Meeting of the Alberta Members February 6-10, 1925," P.A.C., H. E. Spencer papers. The date of the meeting on the morning of Tuesday, February 10 is incorrectly recorded as February 9.

<sup>2</sup>W. K. Rolph, *Henry Wise Wood of Alberta* (Toronto, 1950), pp. 117-18; see chapter two of this thesis, pp. 44-47.

<sup>3</sup>"Minutes of the Meeting of the Alberta Members," P.A.C., Spencer papers.

<sup>4</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup>*Manitoba Free Press*, February 16, 1925, p. 1.

<sup>6</sup>Rolph, *Wood*, pp. 181-82.

<sup>7</sup>There were several reports from the federal members to *The U.F.A.* between February and June, 1925 all of which spoke highly of the whole group's activity in initiating legislation and supporting legislation by co-operation. No mention is made of the fact some members continued to meet in caucus with the Progressives while others did not.

<sup>8</sup>Rolph, *Wood*, p. 182. The exception might have been L. H. Jelliff, see *ibid.*, pp. 186-87.

<sup>9</sup>K. McNaught, *A Prophet in Politics, A Biography of J. S. Woodsworth* (Toronto, 1959), pp. 213-14.

<sup>10</sup>*House of Commons Debates*, 1925, II, pp. 1709-10.

<sup>11</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 1706.

<sup>12</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 1712, 1747.

<sup>13</sup>Cf. W. L. Morton, *The Progressive Party in Canada* (Toronto, 1950), p. 200. Morton suggests the "ginger group" became recognized as a distinct parliamentary unit during the remainder of the Fourteenth Parliament: " . . . the Ginger Group met separately, in time was admitted to separate representation on committees of the House, and in general, developed a distinct character of its own for the rest of the Fourteenth Parliament." The point in question is the representation on committees. Morton does not provide any source for his statement and the above instance was the only one this writer could locate regarding committee appointments that might be an instance of what Morton was making reference to. Further, a description of how committees were appointed in W. F. Dawson,



*Procedure in the House of Commons* (Toronto, 1962), pp. 193-210 suggests the standing committees were the only committees that could have given the "ginger group" separate representation and recognition. There is no evidence the thirteen asked for changes in this respect and therefore it is doubtful the "ginger group" obtained this formal recognition.

<sup>14</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 205-07.

<sup>15</sup>*Grain Growers' Guide*, July 8, 1925, p. 3. . Quoted in Morton, *Progressive Party*, p. 207.

<sup>16</sup>The Progressive election campaign is described in Morton, *Progressive Party*, pp. 236-45 and Rolph, *Wood*, pp. 183-84.

<sup>17</sup>Total representation: 116 Conservatives, 102 Liberals, 15 Progressives, 9 U.F.A., 2 Labour, and 1 Independent.

<sup>18</sup>*The U.F.A.*, December 1, 1925, p. 6.

<sup>19</sup>The federal members, in their reports to *The U.F.A.*, from January to April described the work of the session in terms of an experiment in group government, see *The U.F.A.*, February 1, 1926, p. 4; *ibid.*, March 11, 1926, p. 4; *ibid.*, April 15, 1926, p. 7.

<sup>20</sup>*Ibid.*, January 15, 1926, p. 7. This was a letter from Spencer to *The U.F.A.*, January 5, 1926.

<sup>21</sup>D. M. Kennedy to Spencer, December 24, 1925, P.A.C., Spencer papers.

<sup>22</sup>The two Ontario Progressives were not mentioned as having been invited to the meeting or as having attended.

<sup>23</sup>*The U.F.A.*, January 15, 1926, p. 7. A copy of the minutes of the U.F.A. group meeting is found in the Spencer papers, file 20, G.F.A. Spencer edited his papers before depositing them at the P.A.C. and the G.F.A. These particular minutes have no date aside from January 5. It refers to the central committee, however, and from the information in Spencer's letter to *The U.F.A.* noted above, it may be concluded that these are the minutes of this second meeting. Spencer dated the document as 1922 but this would seem to be in error.

<sup>24</sup>*The U.F.A.*, March 11, 1926, p. 4. See Morton, *Progressive Party*, pp. 133, 148, 218-19 for the use of the terms coalition and fusion as important differentiations of the distinctive U.F.A.-Albertan attitude to political action.





<sup>25</sup>Cf. McNaught, *Prophet in Politics*, p. 213: "During 1924 and 1925 the 'co-operating independents', as Woodsworth sometimes termed the Ginger Group, formed almost unconsciously a more cohesive section of the House." This writer, in the course of research, failed to locate any synonymous usage of "ginger group" and "co-operating independents" by Woodsworth. He used the term "ginger group" in 1924 and 1925 to describe himself, Irvine, Shaw and the ten dissident Progressives, see *Winnipeg Tribune*, July 28, 1924, p. 1; *Ottawa Citizen*, November 12, 1925, p. 1. The term "co-operating independents" was used interchangeably with "co-operating groups" during and after the 1926 session and up to the formation of the C.C.F. in 1932-1933. For a fuller discussion of the significance of this point, see chapter five of this thesis.

<sup>26</sup>H. Blair Neatby, *William Lyon Mackenzie King, The Lonely Heights, 1924-1932*, II (Toronto, 1963), p. 78; Roger Graham, *Arthur Meighen, And Fortune Fled*, II (Toronto, 1963), p. 246; Morton, *Progressive Party*, p. 246.

<sup>27</sup>Morton, *Progressive Party*, p. 248.

<sup>28</sup>Cf. *ibid.*, p. 248; Graham, *Meighen*, p. 378; McNaught, *Prophet in Politics*, p. 216; Neatby, *King*, pp. 107-12.

<sup>29</sup>Morton, *Progressive Party*, p. 249.

<sup>30</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>31</sup>*House of Commons Debates*, 1926, I, p. 25.

<sup>32</sup>McNaught, *Prophet in Politics*, p. 216. The implication in McNaught's statement is that Woodsworth's influence on the "ginger group" brought agreement from them not to seek any legislative initiative. This is not apparent when one considers the action of the Progressive group, the "co-operating groups", throughout the session.

<sup>33</sup>Morton, *Progressive Party*, pp. 249, 252; Neatby, *King*, pp. 127-28, 130-31.

<sup>34</sup>Neatby, *King*, pp. 127-29. Cf. McNaught, *Prophet in Politics*, p. 216; Morton, *Progressive Party*, p. 252.

<sup>35</sup>Morton, *Progressive Party*, pp. 254-55; Neatby, *King*, pp. 127-28, 130-31.

<sup>36</sup>Morton, *Progressive Party*, p. 253.

<sup>37</sup>Neatby, *King*, pp. 114-16, 132-43. Details are from this account.



<sup>38</sup> Woodsworth drew a tongue-lashing from Milton Campbell who called the motion an attempt to whitewash the scandal, see *House of Commons Debates*, 1926, IV, p. 5019; McNaught, *Prophet in Politics*, p. 225. McNaught suggests Campbell's harsh words were far more bitter to Woodsworth than any others. It should be noted that Campbell was a former gingerite.

<sup>39</sup> Neatby, *King*, pp. 143-51; Graham, *Meighen*, pp. 414-51. Details of the events from June 28 to July 2, 1926 are from Graham, *Meighen*, pp. 427-44 except where noted.

<sup>40</sup> *Montreal Gazette*, July 3, 1926, p. 3. Quoted in R. M. Dawson, Ed., *Constitutional Issues in Canada, 1900-31* (London, 1933), p. 85; Graham, *Meighen*, p. 429.

<sup>41</sup> Neatby, *King*, pp. 142, 152.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 155-56; Graham, *Meighen*, pp. 440-42.

<sup>43</sup> Morton, *Progressive Party*, pp. 255-59.

<sup>44</sup> "Minutes of Meeting of Progressive Group, July 2, 1926 at 8:00 pm," copy in the E. J. Garland scrapbooks, in possession of Mr. Garland.

<sup>45</sup> *Montreal Gazette*, July 3, 1926, p. 1.

<sup>46</sup> *The U.F.A.*, August 2, 1926, p. 6. Details of the conference are from this report. Outside press was excluded.

<sup>47</sup> William Irvine returned to the House as the M.P. for Wetaskiwin. He had run as a U.F.A. candidate. Morton, *Progressive Party*, pp. 224-25 states the stronger anti-gingerites were eliminated in this election. Kellner had been defeated in 1925 but was re-elected in 1926. Boutillier was a U.F.A. member only during the 1926 session and lost his re-nomination bid to Michael Luchkovich. D. W. Warner did not return to Parliament after the 1925 election. Since the U.F.A. representation did not change that substantially after the 1926 election, Morton's conclusion is a debatable one. By the time of the 1926 election the elimination of the anti-gingerite members was really not a factor in the achievement of group solidarity at Ottawa.

<sup>48</sup> Spencer to Woodsworth, December 13, 1926, P.A.C., Spencer papers.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>50</sup> "Minutes of Meeting" December 16, 1926, P.A.C., Spencer papers.



<sup>51</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>52</sup>The Spencer papers at the P.A.C. and the G.F.A. do not have a specified copy of the resolution. There are three copies of a statement, one of which may be the document in question, in the Spencer papers, P.A.C. As noted before, Spencer edited his papers prior to depositing them in the two archives. Two of the statements are entitled "Working Arrangements of the Co-operating Groups in the House of Commons," and at the top of the page the date 1926 has been written in. The third copy has no date written on it and it appears to be an original copy whereas the other two are more recent copies. There is no typed-in date on any of three documents all of which are in typescript. The two with the hand-written date 1926 resemble that described in Walter Young, *The Anatomy of a Party: The National CCF, 1932-1961* (Toronto, 1969), p. 30. Young's source is Wilfred Eggleston, "Groups and the Election," *Toronto Star*, June 6, 1930, p. 6. Eggleston describes a constitution drawn up by the "co-operating groups" in 1930 that contained a preamble and seven clauses. This would appear to be the two titled documents of 1926 in the Spencer papers. The third document has a preamble and six clauses but the substance of all three is almost identical; the third undated, untitled document has one less clause and not quite as much content in two of the clauses. This third document may have been the draft for the 1930 constitution referred to by Eggleston, or it may have been the 1926 resolution. Unlike in 1930, there appears to have been no public release of the 1926 resolution of co-operation, although it was hinted by William Irvine, see *The U.F.A.*, January 3, 1927, p. 1, quoted below p. 82.

<sup>53</sup>E. A. Partridge to Woodsworth, August 31, 1922, P.A.C., J. S. Woodsworth papers, Correspondence. Partridge referred to an earlier letter from Woodsworth in which the latter spoke of the need for "some sort of religious-ethical-political movement as about due" to achieve the new social order. The theme is a familiar one with Woodsworth in the 1920's.

<sup>54</sup>Woodsworth to Theodore Debs, February 7, 1927, P.A.C., Woodsworth papers, Correspondence.

<sup>55</sup>After the Progressive split of 1924, Woodsworth thought the basis of such an organization had been formed because of the co-operation of the ten Progressives, Shaw, Irvine and himself. He publicized the thirteen as the "ginger group" in this interpretation, see *Winnipeg Tribune*, July 28, 1924, p. 1; *Calgary Albertan*, October 9, 1924, p. 1; *The Canadian Forum*, November, 1924, pp. 40-41. In light of subsequent developments, Woodsworth had over-estimated the impact of the split just as he had the 1927 arrangement. It would take the Great Depression to alter the "limits" of co-operation.







<sup>56</sup>*The U.F.A.*, January 3, 1927, pp. 1, 14.

<sup>57</sup>"Working Arrangements of the Co-operating Groups in the House of Commons," P.A.C., Spencer papers. See appendix for copy of same.

<sup>58</sup>*The U.F.A.*, January 3, 1927, p. 15.

<sup>59</sup>"No Amalgamation with any other group," P.A.C., Spencer papers.

<sup>60</sup>Cf. McNaught, *Prophet in Politics*, p. 228; Walter Young, *Democracy and Discontent* (Toronto, 1969), p. 53.



## CHAPTER IV

### A VOICE FROM THE PAST: THE U.F.A., THE GINGER GROUP, AND THE C.C.F., 1927-1939

The parliamentary sessions of the Sixteenth Parliament did not modify the basis of co-operation that had been arrived at in December, 1926 by the "co-operating groups". Even though third parties or groups became recognized in the House of Commons,<sup>1</sup> the presence of a majority government returned the country to its old methods of party government. The Sixteenth Parliament did not produce any serious divisions within the "co-operating groups" as the basis of political action was generally agreed to by the members of the groups. No issue, however, emerged that required a concerted effort by the groups which might have led to the formation of a national organization to provide redress for grievances.

The vitality of the general reform movement was in decline after 1926; politically the Progressive movement had failed to force a realignment of the old parties and to make any substantial reform of the political system.<sup>2</sup> In the parliamentary sessions of 1927-1930, the "co-operating groups" were essentially a pressure group representing provincial, occupational and reform concerns in the House of Commons. They continued to act as a watchdog over government corruption



as demonstrated by their aid in Robert Gardiner's instigation of the Beauharnois investigation; the groups supported Woodsworth in the filibuster to reform divorce legislation; they also continued their agitation on behalf of a more reasonable approach to policy related to immigration, agriculture and labour problems while introducing positive proposals like the National Research Institute.<sup>3</sup> For their part, the U.F.A. members continued to advance the principle of government intervention as a necessary means of controlling and regulating the interests of the economic groups so that these interests might receive a balanced, equitable hearing in society and the legislature. The co-operative principle continued to be the mainstay of their proposals, but they still lacked a comprehensive program of action that would have a national appeal. The impetus for such a program and the formation of a national organization came only after the beginning of the Great Depression and the election of the Conservative government of R. B. Bennett in 1930.

In anticipation of the 1930 election, the "co-operating groups" drew up another working arrangement. It was given public notice by Wilfred Eggleston in the *Toronto Star*, June 6, 1930. The document was reported to have been drawn up sometime after the budget debate of May.<sup>4</sup> Eggleston interpreted the working arrangement as having " . . . crystallized and expressed a co-operation that has been growing during the past four years, and it forecasts their basis of political action in the next parliament".<sup>5</sup> Although this





statement is open to debate, it is interesting to note why the "co-operating groups" working arrangement was being discussed and why the groups had drawn it up in the first place:

Under some circumstances the activities of a score or so of members in a house 245 strong would be of no particular significance. But should neither the Liberal nor the Conservative party succeed in obtaining a clear majority in the forthcoming election, this cluster of independent groups would be projected into the very centre of the political arena.

In a sense the drafting of this constitution had in mind such an eventuality. A deadlock of the two major parties would result in the independent groups being subjected to powerful disintegrating efforts by one party or another, under some circumstances by both. But the "Co-operating Groups" do not intend to be assimilated by either of the major parties. Hence the perfection of their hitherto loose organization; hence the "working arrangement".<sup>6</sup>

The "co-operating groups", unhappy with the protectionist budget of May, asserted that changes in fiscal policy were not in themselves enough to check the inequalities of the economic system. In an amendment to the budget, moved by W. R. Fansher of Saskatchewan, they had called for the " . . . development of co-operative principles, having regard to production, distribution, and the utilization and control of credit" as the only means of achieving an equitable economic, and therefore, social order.<sup>7</sup> The experience of 1921-1926 was clearly evident in what Eggleston saw as the purpose behind the group's "constitution". The groups were confirming that experience as it was to serve as the basis of organization and independent political action in preparing them to assume the balance of power again. At the same time, the amendment to the budget demonstrated the widening of



their point of view to a more comprehensive program that would serve the interests of the economic groups they represented. The principle of group co-operation was essential to this point of view, and therefore it was expressed in the preamble to the working arrangement:

Whereas,--We, the Farmer and Labour Groups in the House of Commons, Ottawa, in conference assembled, find that we have much in common and recognize that we are engaged in the common fight against a strongly entrenched system of special privilege, which is functioning through the party system, recognize the advisability of each Group retaining its identity in Parliament, thus enabling the Group to give voice to the distinctive viewpoint held by the electorate represented by them, and also that in working together, we may assist in the development of a co-operative system of administration.

And whereas,--We believe that the co-operation of all Groups in Parliament, for the purpose of obtaining just and beneficial legislation and efficient administration of public business generally, is to be desired, rather than the bitter competition between two major parties, each of which seeks above all else to secure power.

Be it therefore resolved,--. . . .<sup>8</sup>

There followed seven points related to parliamentary organization, the appointment of a chairman, an executive committee, their duties, and when meetings of the group are to be held. One of the points considered was the question of principle and procedure:

In regard to any matter brought before the Inter-Group meeting, it shall be first decided whether such a matter is one of principle or procedure. When it is the latter, it is hoped that there will be unity of action, but when it is the former, latitude must be allowed for the individual judgment.<sup>9</sup>

The context does not specify if individual judgment refers to the individual member or the individual group, but since both elements were present within the experience of the



"co-operating groups" presumably it could have meant either one. In a sense the statement was reiterating the principle of constituency autonomy, and the principle of the individual accepting the dictates of both conscience and the will of his constituents. For example, in the 1932 session Agnes Macphail voted with the Conservative administration's decision to reduce civil servant's salaries. In explaining her stand, she stated that, although she personally was opposed to the measure, she felt her constituency by and large would support it. As the representative of her constituency's will she must support the measure.<sup>10</sup> The idea of constituency autonomy was allowed for in the working arrangement, a principle that was as important as group unity. Once again the implication of the parliamentary experience was evident in the intention behind the arrangement of 1930.

The groups would co-operate with, but not from within, other groups. The groups' independence continued to be a dominant theme, the mark of the U.F.A.-Albertan influence. The organization continued to have some structure and discipline within the principle accepted by all participants. It was, however, compared to the old parties, a relatively unstructured and undisciplined organization. The "co-operating groups" had a chairman and a secretary as well as a house committee composed of the chairmen from the various provincial groups. Robert Gardiner was once again the chairman of the U.F.A. group for the Seventeenth Parliament and Henry Spencer was the secretary. Spencer also acted as the





secretary and whip for the "co-operating groups". The internal structure of the groups was the organizational ideal the parliamentary groups would contribute to the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation in its attempt to find a basis of independent political action in terms of co-operative group organization.<sup>11</sup>

The "co-operating groups" at the beginning of the Seventeenth Parliament resembled the previous parliamentary groups in some ways. Although the membership of the U.F.A. group was reduced by two, from eleven to nine, the nucleus remained, that is, Gardiner, Garland, Spencer, Coote, and Kennedy. There were two Progressives or Independents from Saskatchewan, Milton Campbell and A. M. Carmichael. Agnes Macphail was the only Independent member from Ontario. Thus all the members of the original "ginger group", the six who signed the letter to Robert Forke in 1924, were returned. The Labour group remained at three, Heaps, Woodsworth and the new member from Vancouver South, Angus MacInnis. As such, the general principles of the "co-operating groups" were not upset as those members responsible for the advocacy of the principles continued in their positions. Even though the groups did not hold the balance of power the principles continued to be maintained.

The sessions of 1930-1931 did not see the "co-operating groups" press the Bennett government seriously about the effects of the Depression. In fact, the groups appeared split as to how much co-operation should be given the



Conservative administration during the 1931 session.<sup>12</sup> But by 1932 the government was under attack from a common front of the groups. The successful alienation of the groups by the government was largely the result of a combination of attitude and action. The Depression had by this time produced intolerable conditions for many of the groups' constituents and the government seemed disinterested in putting forward any effective measures to remedy the plight of unemployed labourers and of drought and debt stricken farmers. An amendment to the 1932 budget, moved by Gardiner on behalf of the groups, called for government control of the financial system and the printing of money to depreciate the value of the dollar; in effect this was a call for inflationary measures to alleviate the depressed state of the economy. The proposed measure was rejected by both King and Bennett, and defeated by a combined vote of the Liberal and Conservative members.<sup>13</sup> The desperation of the groups now became acute in the face of Bennett's seeming inability to heed the plight of the western farmer and the unemployed, his use of force to intimidate those unemployed workers who tried to explain their position to him in March, 1932, and his procrastinations in favour of gaining concessions for the economic conditions at the forthcoming Imperial Conference.<sup>14</sup> The day that the House of Commons prorogued, May 26, 1932 the "co-operating groups" met in William Irvine's office on Parliament Hill to discuss what future action they should take. A committee composed of Robert Gardiner and J. S. Woodsworth was given



the responsibility for drafting a tentative plan of organization for future action, an organization on a dominion-wide scale. There apparently were no members of other organizations present aside from those from the parliamentary groups.<sup>15</sup>

After the U.F.A. members returned from Ottawa in the summer of 1932 the U.F.A. Executive issued its Dominion Day Manifesto proclaiming the need for the social groups of Canada to come together and to co-operate to bring about the co-operative commonwealth.<sup>16</sup> The U.F.A. invitation re-affirmed the organization's basis of political action by its explicit appeal for the co-operation of these social groups. In January, 1931 Robert Gardiner had succeeded Henry Wise Wood as the president of the U.F.A., and the Executive and control of the organization passed to the federal members and the new vice-president, Norman Priestley. The significance of the change in leadership was that the provincial group now reflected the events and developments in Ottawa.<sup>17</sup> The new leadership coincided with the 1931 Annual Convention adopting as the long-term goal of the organization the attainment of the co-operative commonwealth. The term as defined at the 1931 and 1932 Conventions was an extension of Wood's ideas and the new influence of the federal members. But it was distinct from Wood's ideas in that it was an attempt at "broadening out". The co-operative commonwealth was an umbrella term under which the various reform groups of Canada could rally to present a strong, unified voice. The call for





political action by the U.F.A. as a social unit whose membership was adversely affected by the Depression was a call from one group to other similarly affected groups to co-operate under a term that symbolized the principle that had motivated the Alberta movement since its conception as an organization.<sup>18</sup>

From the U.F.A. point of view the need for a dominion-wide organization did not mean the subordination of the group's identity in the proposed co-operative venture. The new organization was only to be an affiliation of groups to realize a legislative program. The Dominion Day Manifesto was designed to end poverty in the midst of plenty<sup>19</sup> and it looked to the affiliation of groups to remove the economic breakdown and social distress:

There has arisen, in many quarters, a demand that these groups, co-ordinating their forces, shall make a definite bid for power--power to make the necessary steps to remove from our civilization the curse of starvation in an epoch of abundance, and to carry out the great tasks of social reconstruction. . . . Recognizing that these reforms can in the main be accomplished only by legislative action in the Parliament of Canada, we place ourselves on record as being willing and ready to co-operate with other organizations throughout Canada with a view to attaining the objects herein set forth.<sup>20</sup>

The Calgary conference of the farmer and labour groups followed on August 1, 1932 and the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation was formed.<sup>21</sup> Robert Gardiner, reporting to the organization in *The U.F.A.* prior to the conference, explained why the proposed federation was required. Stressing the crisis affecting not only the farm community, but other



social units as well, Gardiner told the readership that social reconstruction, the establishment of a new social and economic order, was imperative, but he qualified to what extent the U.F.A. was willing to co-operate:

This is a task that we as a farmers' group cannot accomplish alone, even if our industry be organized efficiently, not only in Alberta, but from Coast to Coast. We must be prepared to co-operate with other social units who suffer today as the result of the breakdown of the economic system. . . . Co-operation involves continuous consultation and co-ordination of effort. It involves action not only on a Provincial but on a Dominion-wide scale. . . . It is desirable that the nation-wide movement shall be known under a single national name. . . . I am quite confident that this result will be achieved without prejudicing in any way the particular activities in which the U.F.A. is now engaged. The identity of the Association, and the name under which for a quarter of century it has carried on all the functions of a primary organization of Alberta farmers, will be preserved.<sup>22</sup>

The U.F.A., therefore, was going to be deliberately involved with the new national organization, but, true to its principles of political action, it was to remain a separate entity in the C.C.F.

At the Annual Convention, January, 1933, the U.F.A. formally affiliated with the C.C.F. It did so with the approval of the "Declaration of Ultimate Objectives".<sup>23</sup> The strength of the affiliation was not as strong as it might have been hoped for. For one thing, the membership of the U.F.A. had seriously declined<sup>24</sup> and for another, the U.F.A. attitude towards independent political action was not compatible with the intentions of some of the other groups who associated with the C.C.F. As outlined previously, the U.F.A. attitude had evolved from the idea of local or constituency



autonomy to the ratification of the idea of preservation of the group's identity. That evolution was marked by the Progressive split in 1924 and the formation of the "co-operating groups" in 1926. In a sense, a parallel development now faced the U.F.A. in its relationship with the C.C.F. At issue was the basis of political action represented by both the "ginger group" and the "co-operating groups".

This can be illustrated by reference to two events in 1933 which involved the U.F.A. and members of the "ginger group". First, there was the resignation of Milton Campbell as a Member of Parliament when he was appointed to the Tariff Advisory Board on February 6, 1933.<sup>25</sup> This necessitated a federal by-election in the Mackenzie constituency. Campbell, one of the original "ginger group" and involved in the "co-operating groups", had not affiliated with any party in his years as an Independent Member of Parliament.<sup>26</sup> The nominating convention in the Mackenzie riding that selected the C.C.F. candidate in June, 1933 was presented with a resolution which would re-affirm the former member's belief in the direct responsibility of the Member of Parliament to his constituency,<sup>27</sup> but the resolution was defeated. Angus MacInnis, commenting on the defeat of the proposal, concluded that the rejection of constituency autonomy by the nominating convention would, if unilaterally accepted throughout the C.C.F. affiliates, ensure that the C.C.F. did not meet the same pitfalls as the Progressive party.<sup>28</sup> The C.C.F. could build a strong political party unhampered by recall, the referendum





and constituency autonomy. MacInnis, as a self-professed socialist and a politician who saw the practical need for disciplined political action and organization, was the epitome of what many farm delegates were to react against at the Regina Convention in July, 1933. Not only was this a clash between co-operative reform and socialism, but it was also a clash over the nature of independent political action on the model of co-operation represented by the "ginger group" and the "co-operating groups" and opposed by the socialists and the political pragmatists.

The Regina Convention, then, was the second event in 1933 which revealed the conflict over the nature of independent political action within the C.C.F. At the Convention both W. C. Good, the former Member of Parliament who had been associated with the Progressive split of 1924, and Agnes Macphail had criticized the strong socialist connotations being given to the proceedings.<sup>29</sup> Good had the distinction of being the only delegate to vote against the adoption of the Regina Manifesto. It is now evident that his feelings towards the new federation were shared by others at the Convention. Some, like George Coote and Alfred Speakman of the U.F.A., thought that the socialist definition of the Manifesto was too restrictive for the amorphous reform movement.<sup>30</sup> But also at issue for Good, and some others, was the nature of political organization the C.C.F. would take. Good had debated this point with Frank Underhill in the pages of *The Canadian Forum* in the periodical's August, 1933 issue.<sup>31</sup>



Good's comments were a reflection of an attitude that was unmodified since 1919. Arguing that party government was undemocratic and unrepresentative of the real social and economic divisions within Canada, Good echoed the letter written to Robert Forke in 1924. The essentials of the clash of opinion between Good and Underhill was a fundamental disagreement over the degree of independence the individual member should have in the House of Commons. In rebuttal Underhill wrote:

Mr. Good thinks (and Mr. Woodsworth in years past has seemed to share his opinion<sup>32</sup>) that there is something dishonest in a member voting with his party on a particular issue against his own convictions. What he fails to recognize is that this may not be due to dishonesty at all but simply to the feeling that for the achievement of its major purposes the party must sink minor differences. The great weakness of the 'co-operating independents' in Parliament has consisted in just this sectarian crankiness, in their inability to distinguish between major issues and minor issues and their insistence on each man going his own way on all occasions.<sup>33</sup>

Good, according to Underhill, failed to see that society was divided by class, that the differences of class interest made reconciliation between the sectors of society impossible in the existing economic and social order. The co-operative principles of individual and group political action advocated by Good were like a "voice from another age".<sup>34</sup> Clearly this was the case, the age being that of the parliamentary experience from 1921 to 1925. Underhill maintained that what was now required was a strong, disciplined party adhering to its policy through thick and thin. Good did not agree with Underhill's conclusions as he felt needless energy was going



to be expended in direct belligerency, a contradiction of the co-operative ideal. As such, if the C.C.F. was to become the agent of the co-operative commonwealth on these terms, it was foredoomed to failure.<sup>35</sup>

At the Regina Convention, others tried to re-assert the co-operative principles against the seeming strong desire to form a political party. Robert Gardiner emphasized the idea of autonomy within the new federation when he stated it was a federation of groups, not a party.<sup>36</sup> The farm groups appear to have been in a minority position at the Convention in terms of the number of delegates they had and they were therefore in a minority position in matters of procedure, policy and organization.<sup>37</sup> In order to make their respective positions heard on any given issue they had to be quite vocal, and therefore, Gardiner was noted for his pointed remarks about the U.F.A. role's in the federation: " . . . the U.F.A. is not going to give up one iota of our autonomy".<sup>38</sup> The farm leaders were not comfortable with the projected organization of the C.C.F. The questions of nationalization and social controls were more at issue than the basis of political action and the dissident farm members obviously adhered more to the criticism of the monetary system they had pursued for over ten years as a means to implementing the desired reforms.<sup>39</sup> But it is as apparent that the form of political action was vigorously asserted by the former "ginger group" and members of the "co-operating groups" because the idea of





a party structure, with a central authority over the affiliated groups, was an anathema to them.<sup>40</sup> Even though these individuals had moved from co-operation for legislative purposes to co-operation for legislative power they did not see any reason to compromise their principles for the reform of the political system that they had for so long advocated. In this they received the support of Woodsworth.<sup>41</sup> Affiliation was not fusion.

It is important to note that the particular members of the "ginger group", the "co-operating groups" and the U.F.A. were consistent throughout to their principles of independent political action. Good continued to define these in terms of the principles outlined in 1924 and with reference to the activities of the "co-operating groups" from 1926-1933. Gardiner, influenced by the U.F.A. Declaration of Principles of Political Action in 1925, defined the principles in terms of group action. The C.C.F. was not to obtain any unity, that is, central control for the organization thought necessary by Underhill and MacInnis, until 1938-1939 when the National Council, influenced by Underhill and MacInnis along with David Lewis and M. J. Coldwell, exerted that control over the issue of the party and the war. In the year 1933, however, there was not a fundamental unity within the C.C.F. that indicated all the participants at the Regina Convention had learned from the mistakes of the Progressive party. The doctrine of group organization had not died in



1926, rather circumstances had modified the principles of group government and independent political action, principles which the former Progressives believed from past experience were still valid and necessary.<sup>42</sup>

By 1934 the United Farmers of Ontario had withdrawn from its affiliation with the C.C.F.<sup>43</sup> In 1939 the U.F.A. was to follow, but for different reasons. The basis of political action did not split the C.C.F. as it had the Progressives, that is, it did not contribute to the disintegration of a party. This step might have taken place if the U.F.A. had not been totally defeated in the provincial and federal elections of 1935. With the rise of the Social Credit movement in Alberta, the U.F.A. was supplanted by another reform group.<sup>44</sup> This was as much the working out of the monetary reform implications in the measures advocated by the U.F.A. federal members, in that Social Credit was intended to make the economic system work more efficiently and equitably, as it was the failure of the U.F.A. government to respond to the challenge of the Depression.<sup>45</sup> Unfortunately, neither Robert Gardiner nor Norman Priestley was a William Aberhart.<sup>46</sup> As a result of the federal election in 1935 only one of the original "ginger group" returned to the House of Commons and that was Agnes Macphail who sat as an Independent member and did not join the C.C.F. caucus.<sup>47</sup> The "co-operating groups" had been replaced in Parliament by a more strongly disciplined, although smaller, third party group. Another transition in political action was underway.



The U.F.A. Conventions from 1936 to 1939 debated the issue of continued direct political action and affiliation with the C.C.F.<sup>48</sup> Rejected by the electorate, its membership still declining, and under pressure from the National Council of the C.C.F. to affiliate with the provincial C.C.F. organization, the U.F.A. considered its alternatives.<sup>49</sup> While it refused to affiliate with the provincial C.C.F., the U.F.A. looked to other measures to put its political energies into.<sup>50</sup> But by January, 1939 when a resolution was proposed to have the organization formally withdraw from all political action, it was debated and passed.<sup>51</sup> The U.F.A. withdrew from direct political action as an independent group after twenty years and the national C.C.F. lost one of its affiliates, a loss that served to aid the consolidation of the party.

The thesis of the C.C.F.'s transition from movement to party has been analyzed by several writers, notably Walter Young.<sup>52</sup> The thesis accounts for the C.C.F.'s transition from a broad-based reform movement to a disciplined political party; but by accounting for the transition from the nature of political action advocated by the U.F.A., the "ginger group" and the "co-operating groups" to the one advocated by those who suggested the realities of the parliamentary system made a centralized leadership and organization imperative, the thesis becomes more valid than as presented in these accounts. For example, by accounting for the debate that was carried on by certain influential individuals within the C.C.F. hierarchy from 1933 to 1939 on the need for a





centralized party structure, and the gradual assumption of power by these centralists in the National Council, it can be seen that the transition from movement to party had its basis in the decentralized, federal structure created at Regina in 1933.<sup>53</sup> This concern for a centralized leadership and organization seems to be the product of the influence of the League for Social Reconstruction and its leading spokesman, Frank Underhill. As early as May, 1933, Underhill had advised Woodsworth of the need for a strong national office and secretariat in Ottawa, a development that did not take place until 1936-1938.<sup>54</sup> Underhill felt that if the C.C.F. was to have any permanency as an organization it must have an effective organization to counter-act the "sectarian crankiness" of the various affiliates, an attitude that was directly the product of the Progressive experience in politics. By 1936 Underhill was offering the following critique of the C.C.F.'s decentralized structure:

As a national movement the C.C.F. suffers from two weaknesses. One is the lack of a strong, well-organized central office. The 1933 Regina convention gave it a platform in the Regina manifesto which has abundantly justified itself in the last three years as a unifying agency. But since then the movement has tended to disintegrate into little provincial parties, each running its own show without much attention to the national field. If such tendencies develop further they will be fatal to the movement as a whole, since the vital elements in the socialist programme depend upon national action. The C.C.F. has talked a great deal about the need in Canada for centralized national control, but it hasn't applied these teachings to its own affairs. Its national executive only meets occasionally, and there are some signs of nice little local machines developing in certain provinces which are apt to be hostile to what they regard



as interference from the centre. . . . What is needed, however, is not discipline but leadership from the centre. This cannot be provided by periodical tours of the Ottawa members of the House. Nothing short of a well-equipped national office will do, with a paid secretary and staff who are devoting all their time to organization work and to producing and circulating literature for the guidance of the movement. It is easy at the national convention to pass a well-phrased resolution for the establishment of such an office. But the hard truth is that the provincial leaders feel no solicitude in this direction; and unless the national leaders along with the rank and file at the convention show enough drive for action nothing will be accomplished except for another pious resolution.<sup>55</sup>

After 1936 a national office was established in Ottawa and a national organizer appointed. In 1938 David Lewis became the national secretary on a full-time basis, and these developments along with the loss of some of the more dissident decentralists like the U.F.A. from direct political action aided the centralizing trend within the C.C.F. This in turn contributed to the transition of the movement to a party. The last vestige of the "ginger group" influence was also lost to the C.C.F. at this time. In 1936 E. J. Garland, one of the six original members of the "ginger group", had been appointed as the national organizer for the C.C.F. In December, 1939, the decision was made to dispense with the post for financial reasons as the National Council decided that it could not fund both an organizer and at the same time maintain the national office at Ottawa.<sup>56</sup> Almost immediately, on December 29, 1939, Garland received an appointment from the Liberal government to the newly-created High Commission in Ireland, a move that reportedly surprised and pleased the National Council.<sup>57</sup> The Council was pleased by the non-partisan stance



adopted by the Government in its choice of Garland as a member of the High Commission, but they expressed surprise because no one was aware that Garland was being considered. The Council became forced to clarify the matter as there were rumors circulating that Garland had accepted the appointment because of his disenchantment with the C.C.F.; the *Ottawa Citizen* gave editorial sanction to this rumor on January 8, 1940. David Lewis, on behalf of the National Council refuted the allegation, and later in 1940 when it appeared the rumor was still current, especially in Alberta, he approached O. D. Skelton of the External Affairs Department in order to ascertain what the sequence of events had been that led to the appointment. This decision to clarify the matter was prompted by the scheduled visit of a C.C.F. official to Alberta and to avoid the embarrassment of the rumor it was thought best to clarify it once and for all.<sup>58</sup> Dr. Skelton informed Lewis that Garland had been recommended for a government appointment by an unidentified Saskatchewan Liberal in September, 1939, and that Garland had met with Skelton in October to discuss such an appointment. Even though the recommendation had come while Garland was attending the emergency meeting of the National Council in September at which C.C.F. support for the war effort was discussed, the negotiations had begun between Garland and External Affairs prior to the December decision to dispense with the post of national organizer. Lewis concluded that Garland had acted on his own initiative, " . . . independent of any thought as to any change in our organization".<sup>59</sup>





However, Garland suggested to Woodsworth that his reasons for accepting the appointment was the decision to dispense with the national organizer's post,<sup>60</sup> but in later years he maintained that it was due to the financial hardship to his family caused by the tenuous funding arrangement of the organizer's position that led him to accept the government appointment.<sup>61</sup> The timing of the appointment to Ireland coincided with the changes that were to directly affect the organization and policy of the C.C.F. and these changes were immediately associated by some as sufficient reasons for Garland's decision. Two editorial writers suggested the changes had caused Garland's departure from the C.C.F.; neither seemed aware that the decision to dispense with the national organizer's post had been made:

It may be that the unfortunate position adopted by Mr. Woodsworth and several other C.C.F. leaders on the war, an attitude which is bound to set the party's fortunes still further back for years to come, influenced the decision of Mr. Garland to accept occupation abroad for which he is highly fitted by birth and education.<sup>62</sup>

Mr. Garland's appointment came apparently as a surprise to the national headquarters of the C.C.F., but it cannot have been any surprise to learn of Mr. Garland's withdrawal from the party. He had lost confidence in C.C.F. politics. . . . The U.F.A. group wrecked itself by becoming entangled in the scheme to organize a Socialist party in Canada under the initials C.C.F. Alberta rejected the amorphous party at the first opportunity in the general election of 1935. Gardiner, Spencer and Garland went down with the wreck.<sup>63</sup>

To outside observers these changes were enough to justify Garland's decision. That a change from co-operative group action to a centralized unity was taking place is also



evident from Garland's reported speeches in his last year as national organizer; he began to emphasize unity rather than just co-operation if the ultimate ends of the C.C.F. were to be achieved, even though it was the co-operative principle that was to be finally realized.<sup>64</sup> This stance may have been somewhat inconsistent, but it is understandable as the C.C.F. was attempting to shore up the weaknesses of its organization and the responsibility for this fell to the national organizer.<sup>65</sup> It can only be assumed that the events of September to December, 1939, created an awareness in Garland of the implications of the changes the C.C.F. was going through, changes that would affect not only his principles, but his person as well.<sup>66</sup> Whatever the reasons for Garland's decision to accept the posting with the High Commission in Ireland, the appointment is significant because Garland was the last remaining U.F.A. member of the national C.C.F. to withdraw from a position of authority in the party. Garland's departure may be interpreted as the removal of one of the last vestiges of the U.F.A.-"ginger group" concept of independent political action from the C.C.F.

This concept of political action no longer had the same influence it had exerted when the C.C.F. was formed. The concept behind the decisions of the National Council was now based on the principles of political action represented by MacInnis, Underhill and Lewis. The Albertan basis of political action had been judged inadequate to provide a strong organization in the Canadian parliamentary system. While the



parliamentary groups and independents had maintained that the best way to obtain reform and legislation was by the co-operation of groups, they had not been a very effective agent except when they held the balance of power. One of the reasons the C.C.F. avoided the error of the Progressive Party and managed to continue to survive as a political entity was its ability to gradually centralize control and subordinate local autonomy to the authority of the national party.<sup>67</sup> The Progressive Party had not been able to resolve this conflict of organization, and this partially explains its disappearance. The C.C.F. was able to build a relatively, strong centralized organization and deal with the issues of group autonomy-identity; this, in turn, can be judged to have aided its political survival.

The legacy of co-operation between the Farmer and Labour groups in the House of Commons, however, was clearly an asset to the C.C.F. in its later years. It not only had had an effect on the formation of the party, but it could be used to strengthen the argument that the farm community could work within a party, which had as its avowed purpose socialism, as a political and economic solution for all Canadians. But, the reason the groups had co-operated was soon overshadowed and indistinguishable as their basis of political action was discussed in subsequent writings about the history of the party. The theme of co-operation in these works tended to ignore the idea of independent political action and the co-operative spirit proposed as an alternative





to the party system by the U.F.A., the "ginger group" and the "co-operating groups". A myth<sup>68</sup> resulted about the "ginger group", partially because of immediate political purposes, with the result that there has been a great deal of confusion about the history of the "ginger group" and its effect on the formation of the C.C.F.



## NOTES TO CHAPTER IV

<sup>1</sup>W. F. Dawson, *Procedure in the House of Commons* (Toronto, 1962), pp. 25-26.

<sup>2</sup>W. L. Morton, *The Progressive Party in Canada* (Toronto, 1950), pp. 266-68; Richard Allen, *The Social Passion, Religion and Social Reform in Canada, 1914-1928* (Toronto, 1971), p. 351.

<sup>3</sup>Blair Neatby, *William Lyon Mackenzie King, The Lonely Heights, 1924-1932*, II (Toronto, 1963), pp. 218-326; K. McNaught, *A Prophet in Politics, A Biography of J. S. Woodsworth* (Toronto, 1959), pp. 237-42; *House of Commons Debates*, 1928, I, pp. 411-29.

<sup>4</sup>Wilfred Eggleston, "Groups and the Election," *Toronto Star*, June 6, 1930, p. 6. Referred to in George Hougham, "Minor Parties in Canadian National Politics, 1867-1940" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, 1954), p. 198; Margaret Stewart and Doris French, *Ask No Quarter, A Biography of Agnes Macphail* (Toronto, 1959), p. 157; Walter Young, *The Anatomy of a Party: The National CCF, 1932-1961* (Toronto, 1969), p. 30.

<sup>5</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>6</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>7</sup>*House of Commons Debates*, 1930, III, p. 2137. Quoted in Hougham, "Minor Parties", p. 197.

<sup>8</sup>"Working Arrangement of the Co-operating Groups in the House of Commons," P.A.C., H. E. Spencer papers. Quoted in Eggleston, "Groups and the Election."

<sup>9</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>10</sup>Stewart and French, *Ask No Quarter*, pp. 159-60; *House of Commons Debates*, 1932, I, p. 762.

<sup>11</sup>Hougham, "Minor Parties", pp. 208-10; Gerald Caplan, "The Co-operative Commonwealth Federation in Ontario, 1932-1945: A Study of Socialist and Anti-Socialist Politics" (unpublished M.A. thesis, University of Toronto, 1961), pp. 6-7.

<sup>12</sup>Neatby, *King*, pp. 364-68.

<sup>13</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 395-97; *House of Commons Debates*, 1932, III, p. 2413.



<sup>14</sup>Neatby, *King*, p. 401; Caplan, "Co-operative Commonwealth Federation," p. 15.

<sup>15</sup>"Extract from Minutes of the Co-operating Groups May 26, 1932," copies in P.A.C., Spencer papers, and J. S. Woodsworth scrapbooks, 1932-1937. It should be noted that the minutes do not refer to the formation of the "Commonwealth Party", but just refer to the matter of a tentative plan for a dominion-wide organization, cf. McNaught, *Prophet in Politics*, pp. 259-60. Also, there appears to have been no member of the League for Social Reconstruction present, see Michiel Horn, "The League for Social Reconstruction: Socialism and Nationalism in Canada, 1931-1945" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Toronto, 1969), p. 128n. The reference to the "Commonwealth Party" and the L.S.R. people would appear to derive from subsequent writings about the meeting, cf. Young, *Anatomy of a Party*, p. 30n; Grace MacInnis, *J. S. Woodsworth, A Man to Remember* (Toronto, 1953), p. 262; C. C. F. National Office, *The First Ten Years, Co-operative Commonwealth Federation* (Edmonton, 1942), p. 7, copy in possession of Professor L. H. Thomas, Edmonton.

<sup>16</sup>Young, *Anatomy of a Party*, pp. 34-36; W. C. Godfrey, "The 1933 Regina Convention of the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation" (unpublished M.A. thesis, University of Waterloo, 1965), pp. 13-16. The term "social groups" in the Manifesto reflected the modification of the group theory apparent since 1926.

<sup>17</sup>Carl Betke, "The United Farmers of Alberta, 1921-1935: The Relationship Between the Agricultural Organization and the Government of Alberta" (unpublished M.A. thesis, University of Alberta, 1971), pp. 131-35; W. K. Rolph, *Henry Wise Wood of Alberta* (Toronto, 1950), p. 215; Morton, *Progressive Party*, pp. 279-80.

<sup>18</sup>*The U.F.A.*, July 2, 1932, p. 7.

<sup>19</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>20</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>21</sup>Morton, *Progressive Party*, pp. 275-82; Young, *Anatomy of a Party*, pp. 13-36; McNaught, *Prophet in Politics*, pp. 255-61.

<sup>22</sup>*The U.F.A.*, August 2, 1932, p. 9.

<sup>23</sup>*Ibid.*, February 1, 1933, pp. 4-5.

<sup>24</sup>Betke, "United Farmers of Alberta," pp. 109, 141-42.

<sup>25</sup>Order-in Council, February 6, 1933, P.A.C., R. B. Bennett papers, "Tariff Board".





<sup>26</sup> Campbell's voting record might suggest Conservative sympathies, although this was more likely due to his personal antipathy for Mackenzie King; see "As the World Wags On," *London Free Press*, November 27, 1965, clipping in the John and Gertrude Telford papers, "Letters from M. N. Campbell," in possession of Mrs. Telford, Edmonton. Campbell did not face a Conservative candidate in either the 1926 or 1930 federal elections. Further to the appointment, Campbell requested that his name be considered as he felt he could best serve the interests of his constituents on the Tariff Board rather than as a Member of Parliament, Campbell to R. B. Bennett, June 13 and July 8, 1932, P.A.C., Bennett papers, "Tariff Board"; Campbell to John and Gertrude Telford, December 18, 1949, Telford papers.

<sup>27</sup> R. G. Stuart, "The Early Political Career of Angus MacInnis" (unpublished M.A. thesis, University of British Columbia, 1970), p. 101. The source cited is the *Commonwealth*, June 28, 1933.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>29</sup> Godfrey, "1933 Regina Convention," pp. 52-53, 61.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 63-64; Young, *Anatomy of a Party*, pp. 47-48.

<sup>31</sup> *The Canadian Forum*, August, 1933, pp. 411-16.

<sup>32</sup> An example of what Underhill may have been referring to was an article Woodsworth wrote for the *Queen's Quarterly*, Autumn, 1930, pp. 648-55.

<sup>33</sup> *The Canadian Forum*, August, 1933, p. 412.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 411.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 416.

<sup>36</sup> *Canadian Annual Review*, 1934, p. 51.

<sup>37</sup> Godfrey, "1933 Regina Convention," pp. 61-64, 122.

<sup>38</sup> *Regina Leader-Post*, July 21, 1933, p. 2. Quoted in Godfrey, "1933 Regina Convention," p. 57.

<sup>39</sup> Godfrey, "1933 Regina Convention," pp. 61-64; H. E. Spencer to C. H. Douglas, April 3, 1936, G.F.A., Spencer papers, file 19.



<sup>40</sup>In later years Milton Campbell reaffirmed his own belief in these principles of independent political action as a means of obtaining equal representation for a smaller group within a larger one, Campbell to the Telfords, June 6, 1945, November 23, 1951, July 31, 1955, Telford papers.

<sup>41</sup>*Edmonton Journal*, August 24, 1932, p. 1.

<sup>42</sup>Morton, *Progressive Party*, p. 280. Cf. McNaught, *Prophet in Politics*, p. 215.

<sup>43</sup>Gerald Caplan, "The Failure of Canadian Socialism: The Ontario Experience, 1932-1945," *Canadian Historical Review*, June, 1963, pp. 95-97.

<sup>44</sup>J. A. Irving, *The Social Credit Movement in Alberta* (Toronto, 1950), *passim*.

<sup>45</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 5. Cf. *The U.F.A.*, February 1, 1932, pp. 7-8.

<sup>46</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 290-333.

<sup>47</sup>None of the U.F.A. group returned to Parliament. Spencer was an unsuccessful C.C.F. candidate in 1940 and 1945. Coote was appointed as a director of the Bank of Canada in 1936. Kennedy retired from political life. Gardiner remained president of the U.F.A. until 1944, shortly before his death. Garland received a nomination for a British Columbia riding in 1939, but was appointed a member of the new High Commission to Ireland before the election took place.

<sup>48</sup>"Official Minutes and Reports of the Annual Convention of the U.F.A.," 1936-1939, G.F.A.; Norman Priestley and Edward B. Swindlehurst, *Furrows, Faith and Fellowship* (Edmonton, 1967), pp. 111-38. Priestley and Swindlehurst's account is derived almost *verbatim* from the "Official Minutes and Reports".

<sup>49</sup>"Alberta: UFA 1933-1939," P.A.C., CCF papers. See Garland's confidential report on the U.F.A. convention, n.d., but probably 1937.

<sup>50</sup>Priestley and Swindlehurst, *Furrows*, pp. 111-38.

<sup>51</sup>"Official Minutes and Reports of the Annual Convention of the U.F.A.," Minutes of the 31st Convention, Calgary, January 17-20, 1939, p. 24.



<sup>52</sup>Leonard Calvert, "The C.C.F.: A History of Recent Canadian Socialism" (unpublished thesis, Princeton University, 1941), *passim*; Young, *Anatomy of a Party*, pp. 69-100; L. Zakuta, *A Protest Movement Becalmed: A Study of Change in the C.C.F.* (Toronto, 1964), *passim*.

<sup>53</sup>The theme of decentralized control in the C.C.F. structure occupied members of the League for Social Reconstruction from 1933 to 1936; see Horn, "League for Social Reconstruction," pp. 150-57. Horn suggests that by 1938 the centralists were in control of the National Executive, a move that was aided by the influence of the L.S.R. with that organization's influence on doctrine and organization. One of the key figures in the transition was David Lewis. Also, Zakuta, *Protest Movement Becalmed*, pp. 41-43.

<sup>54</sup>Horn, "League for Social Reconstruction," p. 152.

<sup>55</sup>*The Canadian Forum*, August, 1936, p. 10.

<sup>56</sup>M. J. Coldwell to the members of the National Council, December 1, 1939, P.A.C., CCF papers, National Council file 3.

<sup>57</sup>*Edmonton Journal*, January 2, 1940, p. 1.

<sup>58</sup>"Memorandum dated Wednesday October 9, 1940" signed by David Lewis, P.A.C., CCF papers, E. J. Garland, file 95. Details are from this document.

<sup>59</sup>*Ibid.* See Young, *Anatomy of a Party*, pp. 92-97 for an account of the emergency meeting of the National Council.

<sup>60</sup>Garland to Woodsworth, January 3, 1940, P.A.C., Woodsworth papers, Correspondence.

<sup>61</sup>P.A.A., interview with E. J. Garland by J. E. Cook, May 4, 1970, transcript.

<sup>62</sup>*Calgary Herald*, January 2, 1940, clipping in the E. J. Garland scrapbooks, in possession of Mr. Garland.

<sup>63</sup>*Ottawa Citizen*, January 5, 1940, clipping in the Garland scrapbooks.

<sup>64</sup>"Garland Condemns Disunion of U.F.A.," *Edmonton Journal*, January, 1938, clipping in the Garland scrapbooks; *Drumheller Clarion*, May 27, 1939, clipping in the Garland scrapbooks.





<sup>65</sup> D. E. McHenry, *The Third Force in Canada: The Co-operative Commonwealth Federation, 1932-1948* (Berkley, 1950), pp. 64-67.

<sup>66</sup> This writer tends to suspect that both the decisions of the National Council in 1939 and Mr. Garland's personal reasons were the grounds for his acceptance of the appointment to Ireland. This is based on inferences made during conversations between the writer and Mr. Garland, February 9-10, 1973. When asked if he saw many changes taking place in the C.C.F. during his term as national organizer, Mr. Garland told the writer there were, and then suggested the reason for the changes was because the C.C.F. did not believe in co-operation, it believed in socialism.

<sup>67</sup> Young, *Anatomy of a Party*, pp. 139-48.

<sup>68</sup> Richard Hofstadter, *The Age of Reform* (New York, 1955), p. 24. Hofstadter defines myth in the following way: "By 'myth', as I use the word here, I do not mean an idea that is simply false, but rather one that so effectively embodies men's values that it profoundly influences their way of perceiving reality and hence their behaviour. In this sense myths have varying degrees of fiction and reality." Although this writer does not pretend to think the idea of the "ginger group" has profoundly affected men's behaviour, the following chapter will try to demonstrate how the idea has affected interpretations of the group, which then must have had some effect on how these interpretations have been used to demonstrate why political men should act in a certain way if they are to learn the lesson of the "ginger group". In an interview with the former leader of the Alberta C.C.F., Floyd Johnson, this writer was impressed with the fact that Mr. Johnson still thought the co-operative group idea had validity. When he tried to advance the idea at the founding convention of the New Democratic Party in 1961, it was dismissed as being irrelevant: interview with Floyd Johnson by the author, January 18, 1973.



## CHAPTER V

### THE MYTH OF THE GINGER GROUP: AN EXPLANATION

The relevance of the "ginger group" to Canadian history has largely been confined to the theme of co-operation between the Farmer-Labour Members of Parliament from 1924 to 1933 and how that co-operation contributed to the formation of the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation. This writer does not question the fact that there was co-operation, rather what is being questioned is the reason why these members chose to co-operate. There is a myth about the "ginger group", a myth that does not serve to explain what the "ginger group" really was. The interpretations about the "ginger group" are derived from two books, W. L. Morton, *The Progressive Party in Canada*, and Kenneth McNaught, *A Prophet in Politics, A Biography of J. S. Woodsworth*. But even before these books were published, the myth of the "ginger group" had been created, the product of the writings from the C.C.F. National Office between 1942 and 1945. The result is a confusing synthesis of fact and interpretation that only serves to blur the influence of the "ginger group" on the formation of the C.C.F. Instead of tracing the impact of the ideas of independent political action as expressed in the organizational principles of the U.F.A., the "ginger group" and the "co-operating



groups", the resulting myth has subordinated or dismissed this fact to the extent it has become almost impossible to sort out the impact of the "ginger group" on the C.C.F.

As pointed out previously, the "ginger group" can be considered to have disbanded as an entity as a result of the action of the U.F.A. Annual Convention in January, 1925.<sup>1</sup> The U.F.A. federal members of the original "ginger group", Gardiner, Garland, Kennedy and Spencer along with George Coote were given a new definition of political action by the Convention which was to be followed by all the U.F.A. Members of Parliament. Although there had been difficulties in resolving what action the U.F.A. group in Parliament would take during the 1925 session in respect to the Progressive caucus, the U.F.A. members did not lose their group solidarity. By the Fifteenth Parliament (1925-1926) the Progressive remnant had been re-organized as an affiliation of provincial groups and it was at this time the term "co-operating groups" came to be used to describe the Progressive Members of Parliament. Significantly, after 1925 one does not find the frequent use of the term "ginger group" and the absence is so striking that one immediately notes whenever the term is used and when the term becomes prevalent again. The designation "ginger group" was occasionally used between 1925 and 1942,<sup>2</sup> but the references are so few that one questions the relevancy of the term as a contemporary description of the independent members who sat in Parliament in the years 1925-1933.





In posing this question from the available materials, it becomes difficult to accept the assertion that the term "ginger group" was widely used and was used interchangeably with the "co-operating groups" or the "co-operating independents".<sup>3</sup> Contemporary references to the "ginger group" refer to the context of the events of June, 1924 and January, 1925;<sup>4</sup> other references to the independent groups and individuals from 1926 to 1933 are primarily to the "co-operating groups" which is also the term the individuals participating in the parliamentary organization used to describe themselves.<sup>5</sup> The use of the term "co-operating groups" was quite distinct from the way it is sometimes employed by some writers of this period.<sup>6</sup> The untangling of the myth of the "ginger group" begins by demonstrating there has been a lack of proper designation of terms.

In attempting to place the "ginger group" into a perspective relative to its times, the literature of the C.C.F. was examined to obtain references that might clarify the significance of the group. The earliest references to the Farmer-Labour group in the House of Commons becoming known as the "ginger group" began to appear in 1943. Prior to this time the origins of the group within the Progressive Party and the labelling of the six original members as the "ginger group" were kept distinct. The appearance of the term as a synonym for the Farmer-Labour group came at the time when the political fortunes of the C.C.F. were on the rise.<sup>7</sup> As the C.C.F. began to establish itself as a viable party alternative



through provincial and federal electoral successes, it also began to look back on its history. In 1942 the C.C.F. celebrated its tenth anniversary and its history was becoming important not only to an understanding of how the party came about, but also as a means to furnish a basis for the party's argument that the C.C.F. was indeed representative of Canadian society. The party's pre-formation history clearly indicated that the farm and labour community had something in common and this common interest was exemplified by the co-operation of the "ginger group" in Parliament. From the literature written in this period, 1942-1945, a pattern emerges which meshes together the "ginger group" and the "co-operating groups". The result is what for all appearances is a rather convenient propaganda device for appeal to the farm community which seemed fearful of the socialist bent of the party.

The C.C.F. National Office published *The First Ten Years* to commemorate the party's anniversary in 1942. In a section entitled "How the C.C.F. Got Started," the farmer background of the party was linked to those Progressives who refused to slip back into the Liberal Party; this was the "ginger group". As well, there were the Labour Members of Parliament:

Almost from the outset Farm and Labor groups tried to co-operate, often with indifferent success, but always with growing understanding of each other's viewpoint and needs. Slowly, during the twenties, the idea grew that it would be practicable to form a joint political movement



to achieve common social objectives. This idea was stimulated by the depression and by the return from Europe of a number of brilliant young Canadian scholars. . . .<sup>8</sup>

Here the distinction is made between the Farmer and Labour groups with their contribution to the co-operation that helped form a national Farmer-Labour party. However, it should be noted that there is no reference to the concept of group government and its emphasis on co-operation between economic groups, or to the idea of local and group autonomy.

It was not until the publication of *Make This YOUR Canada* in 1943 that the C.C.F. literature began to blur the distinctions between the Farmer-Labour group, the "co-operating groups", and the "ginger group". Written by David Lewis and Frank Scott, who were, respectively, the C.C.F. National Secretary and the National Chairman, the book was subtitled "A Review of C.C.F. History and Policy". In the chapter "How the C.C.F. Was Formed" the following analysis was presented:

A small group of Progressives, consisting mainly of representatives from Alberta, retained its independence. Its members made a working arrangement with the two Labour men and the "Ginger Group" came into existence under the joint leadership of Robert Gardiner as farm spokesman and J. S. Woodsworth as labour spokesman. Among the group were William Irvine, Miss Agnes Macphail, E. J. Garland, Henry Spencer, and, later, A. A. Heaps and Angus MacInnis.<sup>9</sup>

It becomes apparent, from a historical point of view, that the simplification to achieve what might be best described as a tradition of farmer-labour co-operation made the resulting delineation unacceptable in terms of the actual facts.





This account misrepresents the actual sequence of events and fails to explain clearly what the original "ginger group" represented, that is, a decentralized group organization. The result was the creation of the myth of the "ginger group".

Later references in the C.C.F. literature vary between the two designations of the "ginger group" as the dissident Progressives, and the "ginger group" as the Farmer-Labour group with the attendant co-operation between 1924 and 1933. M. J. Coldwell in *Left Turn, Canada*, and Frank Underhill in *James Shaver Woodsworth* retained the distinction between the Progressive "ginger group" and the Labour members.<sup>10</sup> Grace MacInnis in the biography of her father, published in 1953, presented the "ginger group" as the Farmer-Labour members in the period 1924-1932, and then began to use the term "co-operating independents" in discussing the Farmer-Labour members during the developments of 1932-1933.<sup>11</sup> The result of these writers' efforts is a strange mixture of the connotations of the terms which tends to influence what one thinks is the significance of the "ginger group" and the "co-operating groups". It also influences the interpretation one has of the effect of the parliamentary groups and their role in the formation of the C.C.F.

Coldwell, for example, interpreted the co-operation between the Farmer-Labour members not as the result of compatible thinking about the nature of group political action but rather as the discovery of the capitalistic nature of the economic system, of the fact that agriculture and labour were



merely "two aspects of the same problem". Underhill acknowledged the concept of occupational representation and its inherent class distinctions as being the basis of co-operation and maintained that as time went on the Farmer-Labour members realized they could achieve agreement on major issues; but more than just co-operation between the two groups was required. These men had entered public life to change the system and, therefore, they began to look beyond immediate economic reforms to a fundamental change in the social and economic system to fulfill their dedication to serve. It was at this juncture, according to Underhill, that they decided to launch a national political party with a definite socialist program. Mrs. MacInnis, however, did not go this far in her interpretation and instead confined herself to relating the significance of the "ginger group" to the co-operation between the Farmer-Labour groups. The elements of lack of distinction, significance and interpretation were sufficiently blurred as well as available by 1959 when Professor McNaught published his biography of Woodsworth, *A Prophet in Politics*. This account is important as it assisted the firm establishment of the myth in Canadian historiography.

This biography of Woodsworth contains many of the problems that are encountered in any discussion of the transitional role the U.F.A. and the "ginger group" had in terms of the Progressive Party and the C.C.F. By using the term "ginger group" in such a way so as to simplify and alter the basis of political involvement between Woodsworth and the



dissident Progressives, McNaught at the same time provided the fullest account of the co-operation between the two. Attempting to clarify the Progressive split of 1924, McNaught saw the "ginger group" resulting from a difference of opinion that arose within the Progressive ranks over support of the Liberal legislative program rather than as a difference of opinion over the question of the nature of political action and organization that would maintain the independence of the Progressives in Parliament from the dangers of partyism.<sup>12</sup> He presented a fairly broad-based spectrum of the elements that tied the "ginger group" together and it becomes difficult to determine not only to whom, but to what, the term was meant to apply.<sup>13</sup> But the significance of the group was clear:

The "Ginger Group" was, then, the product of the preceding years of discussion, the influence of the social gospel, the Society of Equity, and the Non-Partisan League; the reading of Ernest Gronlund's *Co-operative Commonwealth* and Edward Bellamy's *Looking Backward*; the immigration of men aware of socialist writing and action in the United Kingdom; the experience of war and post-war problems, mortgage companies and banks.<sup>14</sup>

In the chapter on the 1926 session of Parliament entitled "The Death of a Doctrine", McNaught leaves the reader with the impression that a consolidation of attitude took place among the independent Members of Parliament as a result of the experience in that year. This is not quite an accurate description,<sup>15</sup> but the point was made with reference to the nature of political action and organization the C.C.F. would gain from that experience:





The lesson of 1926 for the Canadian Left was that the frontier naivete of constituency representation and group government would win no national strength; that either to obtain influence in legislation or to implement policy, the party system must be accepted. Political purity would have to be sought not by breaking old parties but by establishing a new one. Even the most steadfast constituency-firsters had for some time been reconsidering their position. As the *Calgary Albertan* editorialized in 1924: although the farmer-labour party was not immediately practicable, the Ginger Group was preparing the way.<sup>16</sup>

It is difficult to accept McNaught's conclusion that group government was dead as a concept with the "ginger group" and that these members were basically oriented towards some form of socialism. If one approaches the "ginger group" through the U.F.A. basis of political action, it is necessary to clarify and qualify why these persons associated with the "ginger group" deemed it necessary to co-operate after the 1924 session and why they continued to do so after the 1926 session. These members were oriented towards reform and chose experimental devices to secure that reform, therefore their interests lay not only in the co-operative commonwealth, but also in Social Credit. The ideas of group organization, which constituted the basis of their political action, were as much the reason for the formation of the "ginger group" as they were for the formation of the "co-operating groups" and ultimately, the C.C.F.<sup>17</sup> The major defect in the McNaught thesis is not having accounted for the formal end of the "ginger group" and acknowledging the separate existence of the "co-operating groups". Without recounting these two features in the history of the dissident Progressives, the history of the independent political action by these Members of



Parliament is incomplete. This, in turn, combined with the assertion that group government was no longer an aspect of the thinking of the "ginger group" makes any evaluation of the impact of the organizational ideals held by these individuals on the C.C.F. impossible. Without such a recounting the interpretation misses the important elements noted by Olive Zeigler in 1934:

. . . These "co-operating Independents" have worked and voted frequently together, although each has maintained his independent sphere of activity. Never voting for either political party as such but supporting measures which they felt would advance the principles in which they believed, they have to their credit a splendid record of concrete achievement and one not generally recognized throughout Canada.<sup>18</sup>

In the works on the background of the C.C.F. which appeared after Professor McNaught's biography, some of the elements of the "ginger group" become lost while others are emphasized. The most important element lost is why the various individuals co-operated together after 1924, that is, the basis of their political action in terms of organizational principles. It appears that it is necessary to re-assert Professor Morton's conclusion about the effect of group government on the C.C.F., a conclusion that did not expand the myth:

A change of tone and emphasis, though not of doctrine, at once appeared in the proceedings of the annual convention and in the columns of *The U.F.A.* [after the succession of Gardiner to the presidency in 1931]. What this change signified was that the teachings of Wood and the practise of the U.F.A. were undergoing a rapid and logical application to the events of the depression. . . . Efficiency of organization was not enough; there must be organized



co-operation of groups. Thus was the "loose link" of the Albertan scheme of group government to be made good, and the "group idea" extended from provincial to national politics.<sup>19</sup>

Because many of the later writings derive their chronology and interpretation from either McNaught or Morton, the results of the history of the independent Members of Parliament from 1924 to 1933, by whatever term is used to describe them, is not complete and shows the imprint of the "ginger group" myth.

Blair Neatby in *William Lyon Mackenzie King* identifies the ten dissident Progressives and the two Labour members as the "ginger group" and does not refer to Joseph Shaw at all.<sup>20</sup> Although Neatby does acknowledge the roots of the co-operation between the Farmer-Labour members as being the result of the group government ideas of the U.F.A., he seems to understand that any reference to the Farmer-Labour members from 1925 to 1932 should be interpreted as a reference to the "ginger group". Neatby is also aware of the "ginger group's" role in the formation of the C.C.F., but he rather loosely uses the term in his description of the 1932 session to indicate a closing of the Independents' ranks as their demands for radical solutions went unheeded. The C.C.F. represented, according to this account, the "ginger group" attempt to form a radical political party to obtain some redress for the grievances of their constituents.

Martin Robin in *Radical Politics and Canadian Labour* is not as consistent as Neatby however, and he tends to blur the distinction between the "ginger group" and the





"co-operating groups" in order to produce an independent Left in Parliament after 1924.<sup>21</sup> Both Neatby and Robin fail to distinguish the individuals who comprised the "ginger group", but Robin, unlike Neatby, does not distinguish the real nature of the co-operation between the Farmer and Labour groups. Following McNaught, Robin concludes that the "ginger group" was a unified body of individuals working towards the institutionalization of a third party within the parliamentary system. Both Neatby and Robin have neglected the intermediate steps of 1924-1925 which produced the Farmer-Labour group, although it is only Robin who does not demonstrate the idea of co-operation lay in the concept of group government. As such the designation "ginger group" is a convenient means of identifying the independent Members of Parliament prior to the formation of the C.C.F. without giving the reader a definite indication of the actual basis of co-operation in a way that a cross-reference between the two works should provide.

Donald Creighton and Walter Young have produced variations on the "ginger group" in their recent writings.<sup>22</sup>

Professor Creighton provides the following:

The parliamentary origins of the new party [the C.C.F.] lay in the activities of the so-called 'Ginger Group', the association, formed during the 1920s, of the radical Progressives and the labour members led by J. S. Woodsworth. This working union of agrarian radicals and urban labour leaders was very largely a western phenomenon; but it became the model from which the new national party was built.

Although one might argue with the designation of the term, the



important element, that the Farmer-Labour group became the model for the C.C.F., should be noted.<sup>23</sup> But, this too falls short of the desired accounting for the basis of political action and organization through the concept of group government. Creighton's short rendering, however, does stand in contrast to Walter Young who, deriving his background for the parliamentary groups from McNaught and his reasons for the Progressive failure in politics from Morton, does not find any influence of group government on the formation of the C.C.F. He does not account for the basis of political action emphasized by the U.F.A. and the "ginger group". Young assumes that all the Progressives held the ideal of the member as a delegate from the constituency and that this was the result of the Albertan influence, but that the parliamentary experience had proven this to be unworkable.<sup>24</sup> Therefore, when the "co-operating groups" met on May 26, 1932, the effect of that experience was evident in the plans they laid:

The fact they were meeting together as representatives of the farm and labour groups was evidence of a fundamental unity that had always existed but which had required the stress of the depression to become manifest across the land. Each had learned the lessons taught by the failure of the Progressive party and all were determined to avoid these mistakes.<sup>25</sup>

The significance of this meeting becomes the consolidation of the participating members to a commitment to form a national political party. Lost in this description is any accounting of the essential elements that were in point of evidence the substance of the "co-operating groups'" parliamentary



experience.<sup>26</sup> What is lost, then, is any accounting of the effect of these groups on the structure of the C.C.F. and how that effect influenced the history of the C.C.F. from 1933 to 1939.

It should be readily apparent that the myth of the "ginger group" has to some degree influenced the interpretations of the significance of the group and, at the same time, has hampered an accurate description of the subsequent actions of the group after the Progressive split of June, 1924. The desire to emphasize the co-operation of the independent Members of Parliament from 1924 to 1933 has resulted not only in misinterpretation, but misrepresentation of the actual sequence of events. The resulting interpretations have made the political importance of the "ginger group" and the "co-operating groups" less and less clear as the lack of distinction between them blurs the importance of the two on the developments that led to the formation of the C.C.F. More importantly, those writers who have misrepresented or neglected the basis of the political action and organization advocated by the "ginger group" and those members in Parliament that were associated with it, have attributed to the group a quality it did not have: support of the party system of government after 1926. The point may only be a minor one, a footnote in the history of the C.C.F., but it does seem necessary to clarify it before an overwhelming myth about the significance of the "ginger group" results.<sup>27</sup> The "ginger





group" represented an alternative to the party system, a characteristic that many, especially those involved with the C.C.F. and the New Democratic Party, do not seem willing to acknowledge.

Because of the consistent espousal of this alternative, there was a part of the Progressive political tradition that had an impact on the formation of the C.C.F. It was the nature of independent political action as defined and practised by those Members of Parliament influenced by the Albertan wing of the movement. By differentiating the "ginger group" and the "co-operating groups", and what each in turn represented, a better assessment can be made of the C.C.F.'s history from 1933 to 1939. To do so, however, requires that we understand the effect of the Albertan thinking on the Progressive Party, and then on the C.C.F. This may be done by dispensing with the myth of the "ginger group". While it may be assumed that "the conflict between centralizing and decentralizing forces is resolved, to a large extent, through the operation of the party system,"<sup>28</sup> there remains the open question of the viability of that assumption. The dissident Progressives followed certain principles and procedures after 1924 which played a large part in determining the federative, decentralized structure of the C.C.F. This was the result of their questioning of the party system. But, as subsequent events in the C.C.F.'s history occurred, it was decided that Albertan basis of political action and organization were inadequate to ensure the survival of the C.C.F. as a political



movement. Unlike the Progressive Party, the C.C.F. was able to organize itself to work in conjunction with the party system. The effect of independent political action in part has accounted for the chronological sequence that led to this development.

In de-mythologizing the "ginger group", the achievements from the co-operation of the Independents in Parliament are not negated; rather, what is demonstrated is that the principles behind that co-operation were judged to be inadequate for an organization that hoped to establish itself within the parliamentary system of party organization. We are aware of the effect of the farm groups' interest in monetary reform on the Regina Manifesto, as well as their reaction to the socialist connotations of that same document.<sup>29</sup> Likewise, we should be aware of the effect of the U.F.A.-"ginger group" concept of independent political action on the formation of the C.C.F. It provides yet another explanation for the farm groups' "incongruous alliance"<sup>30</sup> with the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation, and why the party modified the nature of its organization from 1933 to 1939.



## NOTES TO CHAPTER V

<sup>1</sup>See above, chapter two.

<sup>2</sup>Examples of references located: *Edmonton Journal*, June 20, 1931; p. 5; *Owen Sound Sun-Times*, July 29, 1935, clipping in the Agnes Macphail papers, P.A.C., file 3; the following are clippings from the E. J. Garland scrapbooks, in possession of Mr. Garland: *The Country Guide*, February 6, 1940; *The Western Producer*, June 9, 1932, p. 50; article by Charles Ross, "Who's Who in Alberta," *Calgary Herald*, n.d.; *London Observer*, June 27, 1930; article by R. J. Deachman, "The Sins of the Liberals," n.n., n.d.; *Halifax Evening Herald*, November 17, 1927; *Regina Leader-Post*, June 1, 1933; *Edmonton Journal*, April, 1933; article by H. M. Morden, "A Humanizing Element," n.n., March, 1934. *The U.F.A.* does not appear to have any references to the "ginger group" after January, 1925.

<sup>3</sup>K. McNaught, *A Prophet in Politics, A Biography of J. S. Woodsworth* (Toronto, 1959), pp. 213, 259.

<sup>4</sup>For example: Grant Dexter, "Will the West Go Solid Again?," *Maclean's Magazine*, October 15, 1925, p. 75; D. M. McLean to Arthur Meighen, November 23, 1925, P.A.C., Arthur Meighen papers, p. 87401; "Personalities in the House of Commons," *Daily Province*, May 12, 1931, clipping in the Garland scrapbooks.

<sup>5</sup>For example: *The U.F.A.*, July 2, 1930, p. 9; *The U.F.A.*, July 15, 1930, p. 6; "Extract from Minutes of the Co-operating Groups May 26, 1932," P.A.C., H. E. Spencer papers; H. E. Spencer to the Clerk of the House of Commons, June 17, 1933, P.A.C., Spencer papers.

<sup>6</sup>Olive Zeigler, *Woodsworth, Social Pioneer* (Toronto, 1934), pp. 155-56; *Toronto Star*, June 6, 1930, p. 6; Wilfred Eggleston, "Canadian Farmer-Labour Politics," *The World Tomorrow*, January, 1932, P.A.C., J. S. Woodsworth scrapbooks, 1916-1932. Cf. McNaught, *Prophet in Politics*, p. 259.

<sup>7</sup>Walter Young, *The Anatomy of a Party: The National CCF, 1932-1961* (Toronto, 1969), pp. 105-17; Gerald Caplan, "The Failure of Canadian Socialism: The Ontario Experience, 1932-1945," *Canadian Historical Review*, June, 1963, pp. 99-111.

<sup>8</sup>C.C.F. National Office, *The First Ten Years, Co-operative Commonwealth Federation* (Edmonton, 1942), p. 7, copy in possession of Professor L. H. Thomas, Edmonton. See also *ibid.*, p. 47 for an ambiguous use of "ginger group" by H. W. Dalton. After the 1935 election, Dalton had drawn up





a massive two-part compilation of the "C.C.F. group's" activities in the House of Commons from 1922 to 1935 which is noted in W. L. Morton, *The Progressive Party in Canada* (Toronto, 1950), p. 177n. The two documents identify all the Farmer-Labour members as the C.C.F. group; the purpose for drawing them is not known to this writer: "Notes on Speeches of Group", and "List of Bills, Amendments, Motions and Divisions," P.A.C., Spencer papers. A copy of the latter document is found, G.F.A., George Coote papers, file 36.

<sup>9</sup>David Lewis and Frank Scott, *Make This YOUR Canada* (Toronto, 1943), p. 115.

<sup>10</sup>M. J. Coldwell, *Left Turn, Canada* (Toronto, 1945), p. 2; F. H. Underhill, *James Shaver Woodsworth, Untypical Canadian* (Toronto, 1944), pp. 22-23. Cf. Grant Dexter, "Coldwell the Man," *Maclean's Magazine*, September 1, 1943, p. 51.

<sup>11</sup>Grace MacInnis, *J. S. Woodsworth, A Man to Remember* (Toronto, 1953), pp. 163-254, 255-62. Cf. the use of "ginger group," *ibid.*, p. 163 and p. 188.

<sup>12</sup>McNaught, *Prophet in Politics*, pp. 209-10.

<sup>13</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 165-66, 170, 201, 213-14.

<sup>14</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 213.

<sup>15</sup>See above, chapter three.

<sup>16</sup>McNaught, *Prophet in Politics*, p. 228.

<sup>17</sup>See above, chapter four.

<sup>18</sup>Zeigler, *Woodsworth*, pp. 155-56.

<sup>19</sup>Morton, *Progressive Party*, pp. 280-81.

<sup>20</sup>Blair Neatby, *William Lyon Mackenzie King*, II (Toronto, 1963), pp. 21, 248, 309, 325-26, 395-97. Cf. Morton, *Progressive Party*, p. 197; McNaught, *Prophet in Politics*, pp. 165, 212-13.

<sup>21</sup>Martin Robin, *Radical Politics and Canadian Labour, 1880-1930* (Kingston, 1968), pp. 272-73. Cf. McNaught, *Prophet in Politics*, p. 228.

<sup>22</sup>Donald Creighton, *Canada's First Century* (Toronto, 1970), p. 209; Walter Young, *Democracy and Discontent* (Toronto, 1969), pp. 35-39, 53, 57; Young, *Anatomy of a Party*, pp. 14, 18, 29-30, 287.



<sup>23</sup>Cf. Morton, *Progressive Party*, pp. 280-82; George Hougham, "Minor Parties in Canadian National Politics, 1867-1940" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, 1954), pp. 208-09; Gerald Caplan, "The Co-operative Commonwealth Federation in Ontario, 1932-1945: A Study of Socialist and Anti-Socialist Politics" (unpublished M.A. thesis, University of Toronto, 1961), p. 46.

<sup>24</sup>Cf. McNaught, *Prophet in Politics*, pp. 212-13, 228, 263.

<sup>25</sup>Young, *Democracy and Discontent*, p. 53. The point is more explicit here than in Young, *Anatomy of a Party*, pp. 17-18, 33-35. This assumption by Young explains why in the latter book he does not account for the creation of the de-centralized structure having originated with the concepts of group government and the Progressives associated with the Albertan wing of the movement.

<sup>26</sup>Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 36-37, 57; McNaught, *Prophet in Politics*, p. 263.

<sup>27</sup>For example, K. McNaught, "The Multi-Party System in Canada," in *Essays on the Left*, ed. by Laurier LaPierre *et al* (Toronto, 1971), pp. 43-49.

<sup>28</sup>David E. Smith, "Interpreting Prairie Politics," *Journal of Canadian Studies*, November, 1972, p. 28.

<sup>29</sup>Young, *Anatomy of a Party*, pp. 34, 41, 47-48.

<sup>30</sup>Caplan, "Failure of Canadian Socialism," p. 95.



## CONCLUSION

The United Farmers of Alberta had decided in 1919 to engage in direct political action as an independent group. The principles of independent political action proposed by the U.F.A. helped to ensure the solidarity of its representatives in the House of Commons throughout the parliamentary sessions of 1921-1935. Fundamental to the principles of political action were the co-operation between economic groups and the autonomy of the individual member within the context of the group. The ideas of group organization did not provide political strength when the U.F.A. co-operated with other independent reform groups who advocated the creation of a broad-based reform party under a central authority. In this respect, the U.F.A. seriously weakened any national group it affiliated with.

The U.F.A. Members of Parliament became the center of public attention in the controversy stemming from the conflict between the two bases of political action within the Progressive movement when the controversy came to a head in 1924. Those members associated with the "ginger group" acted with other Members of Parliament to try and make the ideas of democratic, economic group political action work in the parliamentary system. At the same time, these members adhered to a belief that one safeguard to democratic group





action lay with constituency autonomy. These federal members were not able to alter the electoral system and were unable to establish economic group representation on co-operative principles in the legislature. They considered themselves to be the representatives of the agrarian economic group and, as such, co-operated with other members who designated themselves to be representatives of an economic group. Altogether, these were the elements involved in the Progressive split of 1924.

With the disintegration of the Progressive movement after the elections of 1925 and 1926, the U.F.A. ideas of group organization and political action came to influence the remaining independent groups and members in Parliament. When the effects of the Great Depression were being realized, these independents, known as the "co-operating groups", began to plan the formation of a national organization which was to be a broad-based political movement of co-operating groups. This time the U.F.A. members were confident that such an organization could be organized without endangering their principles of independent political action. Unfortunately, their ideas once again came into conflict with the necessary requirements of a broad-based political party and the members of the 1924 "ginger group" found themselves arguing against the principles of organization being sought by the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation.

This time circumstances were such that no split took place on the principles of political action. Instead, there



was a gradual withdrawal of the dissidents from direct political action. By 1939 the U.F.A. was no longer involved in political action and there were no members of the "ginger group" in the councils of the C.C.F. The spirit of independent political action passed from the influence of the U.F.A. and the "ginger group" to those who saw political strength in a disciplined, centralized and broad-based party. During the twenty years between 1919 and 1939 the ideas of the U.F.A. and the "ginger group" had had a degree of influence on the development of third party organizations in the Canadian political system. But that system as constituted did not allow for the development of a political system based on U.F.A. principles. In this respect the ideas were unworkable and therefore their effect was to weaken any political organization the U.F.A. affiliated with since it was inevitable a conflict would arise. The survival of a political organization is aided by its ability to find workable alternatives or to remain with those that are time-tested and proven. It is also aided by its internal discipline and organization and by having an appeal broad enough to attract voters from all economic groups in Canadian society. The ideas of the U.F.A. and the "ginger group" on the nature of independent political action were considered to be unable to provide these characteristics.

To fully appreciate the significance of these ideas on the formation of the C.C.F., it is necessary to dispense



with many of the interpretations and accounts that have been written about the "ginger group". By discovering the reality behind the "ginger group", it is now apparent how the myth has obstructed a proper evaluation of the effect of these ideas on the history of the C.C.F. from 1933 to 1939. Perhaps now a fuller evaluation of that history can be made.





## APPENDICES

- Appendix A: Letter from Ginger Group to Robert Forke, June, 1924.
- Appendix B: U.F.A. Declaration of Principles of Political Action, 1925.
- Appendix C: Working Arrangement of the Co-operating Groups in the House of Commons, 1930.
- Appendix D: Biographies of the ten Progressives associated with the Ginger Group.
- Appendix E: Labour Members of Parliament Associated with the Ginger Group and Co-operating Groups.



## LETTER FROM THE GINGER GROUP TO ROBERT FORKE, JUNE, 1924

Dear Mr. Forke:

With the kindest feeling towards yourself and after very careful and deliberate consideration, we the undersigned hereby inform you that we do not propose henceforth to attend the caucus of the parliamentary group, of which you are the leader; and in order that there may be no misunderstanding, we herein set forth the reasons which have led to our action and to which we propose to give full publicity.

Our first duty is to our constituents and to the democratic principle of the political movement which they so heroically inaugurated. That new political movement began among the farmers; it was indeed the political expression of various Farmers' organizations throughout Canada. Negatively it represents a twofold protest; a protest against the economic burdens that have been piled upon the agricultural industry as the result of forty years of class government; and a protest against a party system organized and dominated from the top, and by means of which the financial and commercial interests have retained power for so long. Positively it represents a noble effort to give effect in the political field to that co-operative philosophy which has not only constituted an outstanding characteristic of Farmers' movements, but which is the world's best hope of saving civilization.

There was, we believe, nothing further from the minds of our constituents than the building of another party machine on the model of the old. That this might be made clear the Farmers' organizations, owing to whose activities we find ourselves here, formulated their own political organizing and financing, selected and elected us and commissioned us to co-operate with all parties, groups or individuals, in order to carry our principles into effect. As we see it there are two species of political organization--one the "Political Party" that aspires to power, and in so doing inevitably perpetuates that competitive spirit in matters of legislation and government generally which has brought the world wellnigh to ruin; the other is the democratically organized group which aims to co-operate with other groups to secure justice rather than to compete with them for power. It is as representatives of this latter type that we take our stand, and in doing so not only remain true to our obligations but have regard also to the obligations which we understood to the Farmers' organization in our constituency. Our task is to represent our constituents by co-operating in Parliament with all parties and groups so as to secure the best possible legislation for Canada as a whole.

In our opinion the principles above outlined to which we adhere have been departed from, and in this connection we desire to draw your attention to a few among many incidents



of the past few years. You will undoubtedly recall that as far back as the Saskatoon and Toronto conferences following the 1921 election, and subsequently at the Winnipeg conference, some difference of opinion and viewpoint was apparent as to the purpose, method of action and future of the new political movement then and there represented. The divergence of viewpoint then evident has persisted; indeed has been, we believe, accentuated. Moreover, in our opinion the present Parliamentary organization of the Progressive group tends to perpetuate the type of partyism already described, which we were elected to oppose, and to hamper us in the advocacy of those principles to which we adhere. Some of us have made attempts to secure reorganization of the group on a different basis, but without results.

Bearing in mind the fact that each constituency represented by us is autonomous in the nomination, election, financing and control of its members, it should be evident that it is impossible to secure our support for the organization of a political party organization on the old lines involving majority rule in caucus, whip domination, responsibility for leader's statements and so forth. The effort--perhaps unconscious--to build a solid political party out of our group has been distressing and paralyzing. As an example, you will recall the situation last year when the Bank Act was under consideration in Parliament. After the caucus had agreed, without objection, to support those of its members who were putting up a strenuous fight in committee for what they considered necessary financial reforms, a sudden change of attitude took place and the majority actually hindered the minority from putting up such a fight on the floor of the house as circumstances demanded. As notice had been given to the Government of our intention to oppose with all our strength the granting of bank charters for a ten year period, the minority had to accept a defeat or break with the majority.

You will readily recall similar instances of past differences of opinion struggling against old parties' properties and conventions--the question of our immigration policy, this year's budget, and so forth, culminating in the recent action of the majority endorsing a proposal to send a Parliamentary delegation to the British Empire Exhibition at the public expense. The divergence of viewpoint has been so marked, that it would seem in the best interests of the movement that we be left free from constraint to work for the cause, independently of the present Parliamentary organization. Such a course, we believe, would enable us to co-operate more harmoniously and freely with those who remain in the Progressive group and who are in agreement with us on any particular issue.

It is with a full realization of our duty to our constituents, and the purpose of preserving the virility





and independence of the political movement of the organized farmers of Canada that we now feel it necessary to take such action as has been indicated. We desire, however, to make it perfectly clear that we are free to co-operate with all others, and invite and welcome the assistance and support of those of all parties who genuinely desire legislation such as will best promote the interests of Canada as a whole.

M. N. Campbell, Mackenzie  
Robert Gardiner, Medicine Hat  
E. J. Garland, Bow River  
D. M. Kennedy, West Edmonton  
Agnes M. C. Macphail, Southwest  
Grey  
H. E. Spencer, Battle River



## U.F.A. DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES OF POLITICAL ACTION, 1925

The following interpretation of the resolutions of January, 1919, and January, 1920, on the subject of political action by the U.F.A. was adopted unanimously by the Annual Provincial Convention on Friday, January 23rd, 1925, after thorough consideration of all the clauses in the resolution:

Whereas, the 1919 U.F.A. Convention decided officially to go into political action, and passed a resolution authorizing the U.F.A. Locals of each constituency to use the U.F.A. organization machinery for the purpose of nominating and electing a U.F.A. candidate in that district, and,

Whereas there have arisen misunderstandings and differences of opinions, and different interpretations in regard to the terms of that resolution, especially regarding the following points, viz.:

1. Whom the elected candidate represents in his official capacity.

2. On what basis he is supposed to co-operate with other U.F.A. members, and on what basis all U.F.A. members are supposed to co-operate, in the interests of good legislation, with other political parties, groups or individuals.

3. In regard to "Constituency Autonomy" just how far this autonomy extends, and where it ceases. Now, therefore, be it:

Resolved, that this Convention, speaking as the supreme U.F.A. authority, officially declares:

1st. That each elected member who has been nominated by the U.F.A. organization in any constituency, shall be known only as a U.F.A. representative, and shall be expected to attach himself to no other legislative group or party, and further, that each U.F.A. member is responsible directly to his own U.F.A. constituency organization and that organization is responsible to the U.F.A. organization as a whole.

2nd. That each candidate so elected shall be expected to co-operate as an individual with all other U.F.A. members, thereby forming and organizing a Parliamentary group unit; and that this U.F.A. group unit shall be expected to co-operate as such, with other Parliamentary parties, groups, or individual members, when practicable to do so in the interests of desirable legislation.

3rd. That each constituency shall have the fullest autonomy in nominating and electing a candidate, as outlined in the two above clauses, but this Convention specifically declares that no constituency shall have the right to use the U.F.A. organization in that constituency for the purpose of nominating and electing a candidate on any other understanding than that outlined above, in clauses one and two of this resolution. And, be it further:



4th. Resolved, that nothing in the above resolution shall be so construed as to prevent the U.F.A. Parliamentary group from acting with, and inviting into their group councils, individual Parliamentary members, especially those elected by other farmers' organizations, similar to the U.F.A., when a majority of the said U.F.A. group decide that it is expedient and advisable to do so. And be it further,

5th. Resolved, that when a bona fide farm organization, such as the U.F.A., from another province, elects a group of legislative members, and these members organize themselves into a legislative group unit representative of that organization, it is the desire of this Convention that our U.F.A. legislative group should co-operate with such a legislative group or groups in the organization of a larger agricultural group containing all such Provincial groups, or as many as will so organize. And be it further,

6th. Resolved, that the principles and policies, as declared from time to time by the U.F.A. Conventions, broadly interpreted, shall be the general guiding influence of the U.F.A. members and the U.F.A. legislative group, and, that with these principles in mind, they are expected to use their best judgment in dealing, in a practical way, with all matters of legislation, in the interest of industry as a whole, and further, that the U.F.A. members and the U.F.A. legislative group shall not be considered as in any way bound by any declaration of principles, or any platform coming from any other source.

7th. Be it further resolved, that when a special service is required that calls for special training in order to render that service efficiently, the nominations for a constituency need not necessarily be limited to U.F.A. members, nor even to farmers. The object should be to select a candidate who will be loyal to the U.F.A. and capable of giving efficient service.

8th. Resolved, that while the constituency organization is the unit through which the political machinery is operated, this unit does not exist for that purpose only, but for the purpose of carrying on all U.F.A. activities of that constituency, therefore, we believe that it is misleading to call them Political Associations, and we advise all U.F.A. units of our organization be called U.F.A. units only.





WORKING ARRANGEMENT OF THE CO-OPERATING GROUPS IN THE HOUSE  
OF COMMONS, 1930

WHEREAS,- We, the Farmer and labour Groups in the House of Commons, Ottawa, in conference assembled, find that we have much in common and recognize that we are engaged in the common fight against a strongly entrenched system of special privilege, which is functioning through the party system, recognize the advisability of each Group retaining its identity in Parliament, thus enabling the Group to give voice to the distinctive viewpoint held by the electorate represented by them, and also that in working together, we may assist in the development of a co-operative system of administration.

AND WHEREAS,- We believe that the co-operation of all Groups in Parliament, for the purpose of obtaining just and beneficial legislation and efficient administration of public business generally, is to be desired, rather than the bitter competition between two major parties, each of which seeks above all else to secure power.

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED,-

(a) That Legislative affairs and issues of public importance should be the basis upon which we shall endeavor to establish co-operative action, but no group shall be bound by any obligation other than that imposed by the merits of each issue or measure under consideration from time to time. In regard to any matter brought before the Inter-Group meeting, it shall be first decided whether such a matter is one of principle or of procedure. When it is the latter, it is hoped that there will be unity of action, but when it is the former, latitude must be allowed for the individual judgment.

(b) That conference of the above mentioned Groups shall be held weekly on a fixed day, for the purpose of discussing the proposed legislation or other issue which may be before the House, and to take joint action thereon whenever such action is possible.

(c) That at the first meeting in each session a Chairman shall be selected and shall hold office until his successor is appointed.

(d) That the conference shall appoint a Secretary to take minutes of deliberations, but that the Secretary shall belong to one of the Groups other than that to which the Chairman belongs.

(e) That the Chairmen of the various Groups shall compose a House Committee, the duties of which shall be to attend to all routine matters respecting the accommodation and service of the members. It shall attend to the seating of the members; make arrangements for offices; attend to representation on Standing Committees, and all other similar duties.



(f) That on major issues, upon which common action has been decided, the spokesman shall be chosen by the Conference on the ground of the ability and qualifications of the individual to deal with the particular issue concerned. In the event, however, of it being impractical to call a conference on a given issue, the House Committee shall be expected to act.

(g) That a majority of the members shall constitute a quorum, provided that representatives of two or more Groups be present.



BIOGRAPHIES OF THE TEN PROGRESSIVES ASSOCIATED WITH THE  
GINGER GROUP

- Campbell, Milton Neil.\* Born Greenvale, Prince Edward Island, January 21, 1881. Married, June 2, 1908. Educated, Public School, Prince of Wales College, Charlottetown. Telegraph operator, station agent, Canadian Northern Railway, 1902-1909. Farmed at Pelly, Saskatchewan, 1909. Councillor for Pelly, 1912-1920. Elected to the House of Commons, 1921, for Mackenzie. Re-elected 1925, 1926, 1930. Resigned to serve as Vice-Chairman, Tariff Advisory Board of Canada, February 6, 1933-February 5, 1943. Died November 11, 1965, London, Ontario. Authored *Reminiscences of Pioneer Days in the West*, 1960.
- Coote, George Gibson. Born Oakville, Ontario, August 18, 1880. Married, December 19, 1910. Bank manager at Nanton, Alberta, 1906-1908. Accountant with a brokerage firm 1908-1921. Also farmed. Associated with the United Farmers of Alberta, 1913. Vice-President, U.F.A. Federal section, Macleod District. Elected to the House of Commons, 1921. Re-elected 1925, 1926, 1930. Defeated in 1935 election as a C.C.F. candidate. Appointed as a Director, Bank of Canada, September 11, 1936-June, 1955. Director, Alberta Wheat Pool, 1936-1952. Died, November 24, 1959.
- Elliott, Preston. Born Chesterville, Ontario, May 1, 1875. Educated, Morrisburg High School, University of Buffalo. Farmed at Chesterville. Elected to the House of Commons, 1921 for Dundas. Did not contest a seat in 1925 election. Died 1939.
- Gardiner, Robert.\* Born Aberdeenshire, Scotland, February 24, 1879. Attended elementary schools. Came to Canada, 1902. Farmed at Battleford, Saskatchewan, and Excel, Alberta. Councillor and Reeve for Municipal District of Golden Centre, 1914-1921. Elected to the House of Commons, by-election June, 1921. Re-elected general election 1921 for Medicine Hat. Re-elected 1925, 1926, 1930 Acadia. Defeated 1935. President of the United Farmers of Alberta, 1931-1944. Died February 6, 1945 at Calgary, Alberta. Never married.

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\* Denotes original six members who were identified as "ginger group".





- Garland, Edward Joseph.\* Born Dublin, Ireland, March 16, 1885. Married, 1916. Attended Belvidera College and Dublin University. Came to Canada, 1909. Member of the United Farmers of Alberta executive, 1919-1921. Elected to the House of Commons, 1921 for Bow River. Re-elected 1925, 1926, 1930. Defeated 1935. C.C.F. National Organizer, 1936-1939. Appointed Secretary to the Canadian High Commissioner, Ireland, 1940. Ambassador to Norway, 1946-47. Retired 1953. Resides presently in Creston, B.C.
- Good, William Charles. Born Brantford Township, Ontario, February 24, 1876. Educated Brantford College Institute, University of Toronto (B.A.). Farmed at Paris, Ontario. President, Co-operative Union of Canada, 1921-1945. Vice-President, Farmers' Publishing Company. Active in Dominion Grange, United Farmers of Ontario, United Farmers Co-operative Company. Elected to the House of Commons, 1921 for Brant. Not a candidate, 1925. Married 1908. Died 1967. Authored *Farmer Citizen*, 1958.
- Kennedy, Donald Macbeth.\* Born Ballinlag, Perthshire, Scotland, August 21, 1884. Married, June 19, 1916. Came to Canada, 1903. Educated Logiejait Public School, Perth Academy, Brandon College. Farmed at Waterhole, Alberta. Municipal Councillor, Fairview, 1917. Municipal Secretary-Treasurer, 1918-1919. Elected to the Alberta Legislature 1921. Resigned and elected to the House of Commons, 1921 for Edmonton West. Re-elected for Peace River, 1925, 1926, 1930. Defeated 1935. Died 1957.
- Macphail, Agnes Campbell.\* Born Proton Township, Ontario, March 24, 1890. Educated Owen Sound Collegiate, Stratford Collegiate, Stratford Normal School. Taught school at Ceylon, Ontario. Director, United Farmers Co-operative Company. Member C.C.F. National Executive. Elected to the House of Commons, 1921 for Grey-South East. Re-elected 1925, 1926, 1930 and 1935 (for Grey-Bruce). Defeated 1940. Elected 1943 to the Ontario Legislature for York East. Re-elected 1948. Defeated 1951. Never married. Died, February 13, 1954 at Toronto, Ontario.
- Spencer, Henry Elvins.\* Born Alchester, England, March 7, 1882. Married, March, 1913. Employed by a banking firm, Stratford-on-Avon, 1899-1905. Printer and Publisher, Paris, 1906-1907. Came to Canada, 1908. Farmed at Edgerton, Alberta. Elected to the House of Commons, 1921 for Battle River. Re-elected 1925, 1926, 1930.



Defeated 1935. Unsuccessful C.C.F. candidate 1940 and 1945. Chairman, Wainwright School Division. President, Alberta School Trustees Association. Retired 1948. Secretary-Treasurer of the Canadian School Trustees Association until 1956. Died October 1, 1972 at Comox, British Columbia.

Ward, William John. Born Owen Sound, Ontario, October 25, 1882. Married, 1909. Moved to Manitoba, 1897. Farmer, Insurance and Real Estate agent, Dauphin. President, Adairac Whole and Fish Products, Ltd., Churchill. Managing President, United Farmers of Manitoba. Elected to the House of Commons, 1921 for Dauphin. Re-elected 1925, 1926. Defeated 1930. Re-elected 1935, 1940. Defeated 1940. Re-elected 1949. Progressive 1921-1930. Liberal 1935-1953.

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Most of the information contained in the biographies was available in *The Canadian Directory of Parliament, 1867-1967*, and *The Parliamentary Guide, 1921-1935*. Other material, such as death dates, was located in newspapers. Many other points of information were obtained from author interviews or interviews made available through the Glenbow Foundation Archives and the Provincial Archives of Alberta.



LABOUR MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT ASSOCIATED WITH THE  
GINGER GROUP AND CO-OPERATING GROUPS

Adshead, Herbert Bealey. Born Manchester, England, October 17, 1862. Married, 1882. Education: Manchester Grammar School, Ottawa Normal School. Came to Canada, 1878. Settled in Ottawa. Moved to Western Canada, 1898, to teaching school and homesteading near Olds, Alberta. Moved to Calgary, 1912. Member of Calgary City Council, 1913, 1914, 1917. Unsuccessful mayoralty candidate in Calgary, 1917. Unsuccessful candidate, 1921 general election. Elected to the House of Commons, 1926 as Independent Labour candidate, Calgary East. Defeated 1930. Died May 2, 1932 at Calgary.

Heaps, Abraham Alberta. Born Leeds, England, December 24, 1885. Married, 1913. Came to Canada, 1911. Became a manufacturer's agent and upholsterer at Winnipeg. Member, Winnipeg City Council; involved in Winnipeg General Strike, 1919. Candidate in federal by-election for Winnipeg North, 1923, but was defeated. Elected to the House of Commons for Winnipeg North, 1925. Re-elected 1926, 1930, 1935. Defeated, 1940. Died April 4, 1954 at Bournemouth, England.

Irvine, William. Born Gletness, Scotland, April 19, 1885. Married, 1910. Came to Canada in 1907. Attended Wesley College and Manitoba College. Graduated in theology, 1913. Presbyterian minister, 1913-1915; Unitarian minister (Calgary), 1915-1919. Acquitted of charge of heresy in 1914. Edited *The Nutcracker*, 1916-1917; *The Non-Partizan*, 1917-1919, and *The Western Independent*, 1919-1920. Authored *The Farmer In Politics* (1920), *Co-operative Government* (1929). Defeated general election, 1917. Elected to House of Commons, 1921 for Calgary East: defeated, 1925: Independent Labour candidate. Re-elected, 1926, for Wetaskiwin as a UFA candidate. Re-elected 1930, defeated 1935, 1940. Elected to House of Commons, 1945 for Cariboo as C.C.F. candidate. Defeated, 1949, 1953. Died October 26, 1962 at Edmonton.

MacInnis, Angus. Born GlenWilliam, P.E.I., September 2, 1884. Married, 1932. Vancouver alderman and trade unionist. Elected to the House of Commons, 1930 for Vancouver South. Re-elected 1935, 1940, 1945, 1949, 1953. Not a candidate, 1957. Parliamentary advisor to the Canadian delegation, U.N. General Assembly, 1947; advisor to the Canadian Delegation, I.L.O. Conference, Geneva, 1950. Died March 3, 1964.





Woodsworth, James Shaver. Born Etobicoke Township, Ontario, July 29, 1874. Married, 1904. Educated at University of Manitoba, Victoria University, Toronto. Ordained a Methodist minister, 1896. Authored *Strangers Within Our Gates* (1909), *My Neighbour* (1911). Held various positions as social worker, longshoreman and director, Bureau of Social Research for Governments of Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Alberta. Elected to the House of Commons, 1921 for Winnipeg Center. Re-elected, 1925, 1926, 1930, 1935, 1940. First leader of the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation, 1932-1939. Died, March 21, 1942 at Vancouver.

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The information for these biographies was derived from *The Canadian Directory of Parliament, 1867-1967*. This was supplemented by other sources, including the available biographies of Woodsworth and Heaps, as well as the theses concerning Irvine.



## BIBLIOGRAPHICAL ESSAY

The basic primary source for this study is the Henry E. Spencer papers located at the Public Archives of Canada, Ottawa, and at the Glenbow Foundation Archives, Calgary. The secondary accounts relied upon were W. L. Morton, *The Progressive Party in Canada*, Kenneth McNaught, *A Prophet in Politics, A Biography of J. S. Woodsworth*, and W. D. Young, *The Anatomy of a Party: The National CCF, 1932-1961*. These were supplemented to a large extent by the periodical, *The U.F.A.* and the interviews made available through the auspices of the Provincial Archives of Alberta, Edmonton, and the Glenbow Foundation Archives, Calgary. By and large the essential chronology and the interpretations to be reckoned with were derived from the three secondary works.

In the main this study does not deviate from the chronology or the interpretation presented by Professor Morton. However, the Spencer papers, Professor McNaught's biography and the House of Commons *Debates* revealed some inconsistencies that have to be resolved if one is to appreciate the significance of the "ginger group" in the parliamentary origins of the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation. The critical period is 1925-1926 and here the Spencer papers proved most useful in filling the gaps of our knowledge of how the



"co-operating groups" was formed. Unfortunately these papers are fragmentary, specifically in the record of what transpired at meetings of the groups and who attended. This is evident when one finds the record of the December 16, 1926 meeting but no conclusive evidence of the resolution passed. The working arrangement of May, 1930 and the minutes of the May 26, 1932 meeting are other examples. It might be suggested that this fragmentary record has in part contributed to many of the misconceptions about the organizational activities of the Independent groups at Ottawa. Therefore, it is imperative to cross-check the materials with other available sources like *The U.F.A.* Next to this source of periodical literature this writer found the *Calgary Albertan* to be quite helpful, along with the *Ottawa Citizen*. This is as much the reflection of the respective editors as it is the proximity to events.

All these serve to make a general comment about the various approaches to the Progressive Party and the C.C.F. from 1921-1939. This writer noted a tendency to emphasize a particular individual or group while over-looking the inter-relationship of the particular with the general climate at the time. This can be both a fault and a reward depending on how much weight and significance are awarded in each instance. The criticism of this method is that it makes assumptions the evidence does not coincide with. Since much of the history of this period remains to be written, one can only hope that future researchers will start their inquiries





by questioning the premises in previous writings. In this regard and in terms of the Progressive political tradition, one cannot stress enough trying to follow the balanced approach in considering as many contributing aspects as possible, a feature that marks Professor Morton's work.

As we examine further what Leo Courville calls the "middle leadership" of the Progressive organizations it will be necessary to bear in mind the distinctions and the premises of those who have explored aspects of this history before us. Only then can a more complete picture of the "whys" of these people's activities be presented.



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